UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE – FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
ÚSTAV ANGLOFONNÍCH LITERATUR A KULTUR

Topographies of Culture and Identity: The Role of Landscapes and Cityscapes in Selected Film Representations of Ireland

Irsko v kontextu kulturní geografie: Role vesnické a městské krajiny ve vybraných filmových vyobrazeních Irska

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

vedoucí bakalářské práce:
Clare Wallace, PhD, M. A.

Zpracovala:
Tereza Pavlíčková

Studijní obor:
Anglistika - amerikanistika

Praha, květen 2012

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného či stejného titulu.

V Praze dne 20. 5. 2012 Tereza Pavlíčková

Mé poděkování patří především vedoucí této bakalářské práce, Clare Wallace, PhD, M. A., za její drahocenný čas, za cenné rady a připomínky, které mi dala, a především za její vstřícnost a trpělivost.

Table of Contents

1 The Social Construction of Place and its Role in (Film) Representations of Ireland

1.1 Landscapes and Cityscapes as Cultural Texts

In his book-length poem *The Rough Field*, the Irish poet John Montague writes: "All around, shards of a lost tradition/…The whole landscape a manuscript/ We had lost the skill to read."[1] The powerful imagery of these lines can be perceived as central to the overall context of the poem since it presents landscape as a text which became illegible to the nation. 'Rough field' is the meaning of Garbh Achaidh – the original Gaelic name of Montague's hometown Garvaghey in County Tyron. As Declan Kiberd states, the native landscape the poet depicts represents a text incomprehensible to the contemporary reader since it is "studded with place names derived from an ancient language which became dead in that area [through the centuries of British rule.]"[2] Within the context of this fact, it is necessary to note that, apart from the cultural effects of colonisation, Montague deals in the poem with the alienation from traditional values caused by the process of modernisation and globalisation, escalating in Ireland since the 1960s. According to Fran Brearton, *The Rough Field* then implicitly provides "a new reading"[3] of the manuscript that the nation has ceased to understand, both through its changing form and style. Following the lines of the poem, the reader discovers how Montague creates a complex portrayal of Irish cultural tradition through 'the landscape narrative' which balances successfully between the present and the past. Brearton specifies this fact by claiming that *The Rough Field* "resists the insularity and anti-modernity, which had been symptomatic of Irish culture [during the post-independence era of protectionist nationalism], and [it] simultaneously validates the importance of the local and the traditional."[4] Such perspective can be observed throughout the poem – Montague satirically comments on some of the aspects of the stereotypical vision of rural utopia and, at the same time, he praises the "dark permanence of its ancient forms."[5] The complex pattern is then framed succinctly within the epilogue, in which the poet states that, with modernity, the nation lost "a part of the world where action had been wrung through painstaking years to ritual," yet, he adds immediately that "only sentimentalist would want to see [the] degradation

[1] John Montague, *The Rough Field* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1979) 35.
[2] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Random House, 1995) 617.
[3] Fran Brearton, "Poetry of the 1960s: the 'Northern Ireland Renaissance,'" *The Cambridge Companion to Contemporary Irish Poetry*, ed. Matthew Campbell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 97.
[4] Brearton 97.
[5] Montague 83.

[of the rural backwardness] again."[6] Published in 1972, *The Rough Field* is a collage of personal memories and feelings, as well as of reflections on both the history of Ulster and its contemporary political and socio-cultural situation. Therefore, The Troubles, indeed, represent an important framework for interpretation of the poem. Still, as a whole, the work has to be perceived as a narrative of the tension – between tradition and modernity – which has dominated the cultural debate in Ireland since the late 1950s, when Séan Lemass was appointed Taoiseach and his liberal capitalist policies replaced the social conservatism promoted by the former prime minister Eamon de Valera. Most importantly then, in *The Rough Field*, the sociological-cultural status of landscape resonates on both a textual and extra-textual level and, therefore, it can be said that the poem introduces the overall context of this thesis, which will use the discipline of cultural geography as the theoretical basis for the analysis of the role of landscapes and cityscapes in the selected film portrayals of Ireland.

Cultural geography is a broad and complex science that deals with the way human beings transform their physical environment into what Brian Graham calls "cultural realms of meaning and lived experience."[7] Cultural landscapes are then seen as texts through which subjective values and feelings, as well as dominant social, political and cultural forces, can be mediated. In the latter case, they actually help to sustain the notion of the unity of societies from which they emerged. However, according to Graham, the reading of these texts differs with the variety of "competing social actors involved in the continuous transformation of societies."[8] Thus, as T.J. Barnes and J.S. Duncan state, they are "culturally and historically, and sometimes even individually and momentarily, variable narratives."[9] As these definitions clearly indicate, human geography represents the strand of criticism which, in Luke Gibbons's words, seeks to "de-etherialize"[10] the status of culture. Its approach to literary, as well as visual, representations of cultural landscapes as elements which both reflect and participate in socio-cultural processes then provides the very starting point for the further observations of the thesis.

As the poem itself manifests, the social elaboration of place had historically a powerful impact on cultural development in Ireland. With the escalation of the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth century, the intelligentsia of Europe had turned to nature as to a place providing a retreat from the rationalizing and alienating environment of the urban centres.

---

[6] Montague 80.
[7] Brian Graham, *In Search of Ireland, A Cultural Geography*, ed. Brian Graham (London: Routledge, 1997) 4.
[8] Graham 4.
[9] T.J. Barnes and J.S. Duncan, eds. *Writing Worlds*: *Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London: Routledge, 1992) 6.
[10] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press: 1996) 9.

Similar to the Lake District of England, the Scottish Highlands, and the rural areas of Wales, the Irish landscape was at that time depicted mainly in terms of the aesthetics of the picturesque. As Gibbons notes, with the increasingly complicated political situation in Ireland at the turn of the nineteenth century, this particular visual framework then helped "[the] new, assertive form of cultural nationalism [...] to accentuate the differences between the [colonised country] and the more temperate irregularities of the British landscape."[11]In the contemporary travel writings, Ireland had been portrayed as a rural utopia where people lived in primitive conditions and in harmony with nature. It was a notion that the Irish character represented a reflection of the country's wild landscape and of its changeable weather which had been gradually established through these depictions. This view then reached its most dramatic, in fact caricaturist, mode with the emergence of the advanced stage machinery in the Victorian melodrama. In general, regardless of the form of representation, the outsider's perspective, rooted in the metropolitan romantic primitivism, had allowed the colonial administration to explain the peasant riots in Ireland as the result of the influence of landscape and climate on the behaviour of the Irish. Thus, it can be said that, through the myth of the primitive, the imperial power had not only subtly justified its conduct in Ireland, but it also strengthened its superior position in this way.

Paradoxically enough, when cultural nationalism started gradually forming itself in Ireland during the nineteenth century, it adopted the very same symbolic structures the colonisers worked with. This seemingly conflicting process has been fully elucidated by postcolonial theory. Gibbons, who counts among the scholars that have contributed immensely to this field of study in the Irish context, claims that the colonized culture strives "to reproduce in [its] own idiom the closed, univocal expression of identity articulated in the imperial centre."[12] Such effort to achieve uniqueness then begins with a delineation of those cultural traits that originated in the pre-colonial era. On the basis of these attributes, the nationalist ideology then seeks both – to construct a notion of the existence of a homogenous culture and to evoke a sense of continuity of the tradition. Within the context of Irish cultural nationalism, it was the western part of the country which, in Marianne Elliott's phrase, symbolized "an organic link to the ancient [Gaelic] civilization"[13] and which was, therefore, as Catherine Nash points out, seen as "the source for the revitalizing of Ireland."[14] Since

[11] Luke Gibbons, "Romanticism, Realism and Irish Cinema," *Cinema and Ireland*, eds. Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, John Hill (London: Taylor &Francis, 1987) 204.
[12] Gibbons, *Transformations* 7.
[13] Marianne Elliot, *The Catholics of Ulster* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 2000) 11.
[14] Catherine Nash, "'Embodying the Nation'–The West of Ireland Landscape and Irish Identity," *Tourism in*

Britain at that time represented the most industrial society in the world, it was the very feature of primitive 'otherness' which was adopted by cultural nationalism as the fundamental means through which the uniqueness of Irish identity could be manifested. On the basis of these principles, the rural areas in the West of Ireland then came to embody the nation as a whole. Overall, as the above-depicted socio-cultural practices show, the process of adopting the essential features of the symbolic framework employed by the imperial centre represents an intrinsic part of the struggle for individuality by a colonized nation.

As for the nature of Irish cultural nationalism, it has to be noted that in the course of its slow, more than a century-long, escalation, it had encompassed a variety of organizations and movements. The last decade of the nineteenth century then marks the beginning of the most significant stage of the pursuit of a distinct national identity. The period of the so-called Cultural/Celtic Revival was characterized by a particularly complex pattern of cultural-nationalist practices. The revivalists shared antipathy towards materialism, as well as a tendency to look to the ancient culture as the source of cultural and spiritual awakening of the nation. Yet, with the increasing influence of the Catholic Church at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth century, a split arose between the dominant strand of cultural nationalism and a group of Anglo-Irish writers. It is then the existence of various forces and impulses in the Irish Cultural Revival which points to the fact that the internalized romantic primitivism had been subsequently elaborated in different ways. Gibbons draws attention to an allegorical form of representation which had emerged "in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cultural practices and modes of protest"[15]and which resurfaced in the early-nineteenth-century romantic novels of Lady Morgan, or much later in the melodramas of Dion Boucicault. This allegorical mode then came to play a significant role in the work of some of the Anglo-Irish writers – J.M.Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) represents its most controversial example. According to Gibbons, such form of romantic representation was eventually subdued by the rather "totalizing [image of rural idyll],"[16] carrying the ascetic ethos of the Catholic nationalist ideology. In its emphasis on the mediation of an authentic vision of essential Irishness, this rigorist perspective conformed closely to the features of the outsider's/ colonisers'/ tourists' gaze. Most importantly then, as a result of the fact that such 'myth of the rural' had become central to the rhetoric of the newly emerged Irish Free State, the cultural discourse in Ireland had continued to be dominated by the image of an iconic

Ireland: A Critical Analysis, Barbara O'Connor and Michael Cronin eds. (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993) 87.

[15] Gibbons, *Transformations* 7.

[16] Gibbons, *Transformations* 7.

landscape for almost a half century after decolonization; the semantic divide between the rural and the urban, which had been fuelled extensively during the post-independence decades of anti-modernism, prevails in Irish culture even today.

This strong cultural significance of the Irish landscape has, indeed, inevitably determined the status of its cinematic representations. As Gibbons points out, landscape in Irish film cannot be "treated merely as a […] backdrop, but rather as symbolic field [integrated within the structure of a film]."[17] Elaborating further on his ideas about the two dominant strands existing in romantic representations of Ireland, he states that it functions as "a thematic element which may reinforce or cut across the other levels of meaning in [a film]."[18] Indeed, landscape can participate in the overall patterns of the cinematic portrayals which place emphasis on presenting a transparent vision free of any social mediation and which thus manage to "press recalcitrant Irish subject-matter into the convenient moulds of realism and romanticism."[19] Moreover, it can play a significant role in the films which retain their romantic framework, yet, at the same time, within its context, they challenge the romantic myth by drawing attention to the constructed nature of their own imagery. Most importantly, landscape in Irish film can serve as a symbolic structure contributing to a complete subversion of the romantic mode of representation. As a semantic field firmly embedded within the particular cultural context, landscape stands in marked contrast to cityscape and its status in Irish visual culture. Since Dublin had embodied the centre of the colonial power and the urban environment as such had represented all the values rejected through the strictly anti-modernist rhetoric of protectionist nationalism, cityscape had been excluded from visual representations of Ireland for more than half a century. Conn Holohan notes that as a result of this fact, Dublin lacks a distinct "monumental imagery,"[20] around which a homogeneous notion of the city's heterogeneous parts could be structured. Thus, the city in Irish film represents a fragmented, variable space in which the prominent voice belongs to the working-classes as well as to identities marginalized in various ways. Two major strands can be then recognized in cinematic representations of Irish cityscapes. The first one, much more limited in the number of examples, involves predominantly films produced between the 1970s-80s; in these films, city is variously elaborated into a more or less culturally distinct layer of meaning through which one can observe the ways the directors explored the issues/frustrations that had

[17] Gibbons, "Romanticism, Realism and Irish Cinema," *Cinema and Ireland* 210.
[18] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 210.
[19] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 241.
[20] Conn Holohan, *Cinema on the Periphery, Contemporary Irish and Spanish Film* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010) 100.

been suppressed during the era of protectionist nationalism. In the films emerging towards and after the turn of the millennia, city represents a globalised structure within which the national and the transnational interact, producing completely unpredictable cultural patterns. Generally, it can be said that with the rapid economic development in Ireland of the 1990s, city as a postmodern space moved to the centre of socio-cultural discourse. In spite of the fact that it could not gain such a prominent symbolic status as the Irish landscape has, it definitely possesses an interpretive value in terms of socio-cultural processes. Being aware of the narrative conventions the directors can embrace through the media of film, one can rely on both landscapes and cityscapes as fairly eloquent and conspicuous elements in cinematic representations of Ireland. The analysis itself will be elaborated against the cultural background from which the selected films emerged. Thus, cultural landscapes, as the thematic elements firmly integrated within their patterns, will serve as an important link between the textual and extra-textual level of these films. Such interaction will then facilitate considerably the process of close reading which is, in the Irish context, strongly framed by the opposition between romantic myth and reality, as well as between tradition and modernity. Finally, since any analysis of cinematic representations is intrinsically embedded within the concepts of national identity and national cinema, the following section of the thesis will elucidate the nature of these terms.

1.2 Irish Identity and Irish Cinema

It is a generally accepted fact that the concept of national identity is becoming increasingly problematic owing to the postmodern conditions permeating all aspects of our lives. Nevertheless, it remains an important feature of interpretation within various socio-cultural studies and, most importantly, it still plays a marked role in one's sense of self. The wide range of approaches applied to the general explication of national identity then testifies to the high complexity of the concept itself. One possible way of defining the social phenomenon is provided by the discipline of cultural geography. Brian Graham works with the already mentioned idea of human interaction with environment in the form of "multivocal and multicultural texts."[21] As he states, identity operates on the principle of exclusion and inclusion, "articulating itself by its contradistinction to a (preferably) hostile Other."[22] Thus, it can be said that only particular readings of the texts lead to the creation of a communal

[21] Graham 3.
[22] Graham 5.

identity. Graham then adds that these "emblematic place identities"[23] are reproduced, as well as transformed over time through a selective rewriting of history. As it becomes obvious from his explication, not all of the elements of cultural landscapes undergo the transformation, since each contemporary community has the sense of "deep-rooted continuities with the past which bring about the seeming collapse or foreshortening of time."[24] Graham then points to the rhetoric of nationalist ideologies which "compresses time and space"[25] on the highest scale by treating a particular territory as a distinct and historic land symbolic of a nation as a whole. This practice leads to the creation of hegemonic landscapes. Finally, being aware of the fact that various criteria, such as gender or ethnicity, disrupt the homogeneity created through nationalism, Graham formulates the definition of national identity by claiming that it is "a situated, socially constructed narrative capable both of being read in conflicting ways at any one time, and of being transformed through time."[26] Indeed, it has to be noted that the presented explication is limited by its focus on place as one of the constituents of national identity. In spite of this fact, the definition Graham eventually formulates does clearly convey the fact that heterogeneity and subjectivity are the characterizing features of this social phenomenon.

In Ireland, the issue of national identity inevitably moved to the centre of the cultural debate as the nationalist politics eventually lost power in the 1950s. It was then the last decade of the millennium which marked the escalation of this focus. The general consensus among the intellectuals of that time held that Ireland of the Celtic Tiger era represented a country which had severed itself completely from the traditional values associated with the decades of protectionist nationalism, and whose society had immersed itself entirely in global cosmopolitanism. Such observations then bore highly positive connotations in the eyes of the proponents of revisionism (modernisers), whereas the post-colonialists perceived it as a fully negative state. The second chapter of the thesis will elucidate in more detail the points of disagreement that arose between these two groups on the issue of the interpretation of Ireland's past, as well as of its cultural production. Before that, it is necessary to stress that such debate was mostly academically orientated and, therefore, it can be assumed that its general view of the economic and cultural transformation, which the country had undergone during the post-nationalist era, did not fully capture the effects the processes had on society and the everyday life of its individuals. Michael Gillespie points out that, as a result of the

[23] Graham 5.
[24] Graham 5.
[25] Graham 5.
[26] Graham 6.

cultural ferment which Irish society experienced in the late twentieth century, "the prominence of the social institutions, such as the family, the church and the nation, has [definitely] declined as well as the perceptions of each have diversified."[27] Yet he adds that "these institutions still remain shaping features of Ireland's national character."[28] Moreover, the economic growth had a rather uneven impact among the social classes and, therefore, one has to be aware of the idiosyncratic status of both the traditional and the modern in the postmodern Irish society. Most importantly then, the recent economic crisis must have further contributed to the complexity of the pattern which reflects Irish national identity. To sum up, if we also consider the existence of various root communities around the world in which individuals think of themselves, to various extents, as being Irish, it becomes obvious that, as Gillespie claims: "in coming to a sense of Irishness, one needs an approach [which] sustains multiple, even contradictory, conditions."[29]

Since the sociological concepts of national identity and national cinema are inherently linked, it can be logically assumed that the study of Irish cinema requires such a compound perspective just as well. Actually, if we consider the basic conditions mentioned in most of the theoretical explications of the concept, it can be said that in the Irish context the situation is rather unique. This assertion is founded on the fact that, unlike in the case of other national cinemas, the film representations of Ireland had been, during the first half of the twentieth century, produced mainly by foreign companies from the United States and Great Britain. Filmmaking in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century is associated primarily with the work of the U.S.-based Kalem Company and its Canadian-Irish director Sidney Olcott. Kalem had aimed to satisfy the demand for imagery of the 'old country' among Irish emigrants and, in line with this objective, between 1910-1915 it produced almost thirty films – mainly historical melodramas, as well as comedies and romances based on popular stage plays by Dion Boucicault. The films focused on representing the resistance of the Irish to British rule, as well as on presenting America as a place of escape from oppression. Their nationalistic ethos had, indeed, invoked disagreement on the side of British authorities. Yet, it is also important to note that, at the same time, some of Olcott's works were considered immoral in many aspects by the Church authorities in Ireland. With the outbreak of World War I, Kalem was forced to terminate its operation in Europe. It was in March 1916 that the returned emigrant James Mark Sullivan founded the first indigenous film company, the Film

[27] M.P. Gillespie, *The Myth of an Irish Cinema, Approaching Irish-Themed Films* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008) 231.
[28] Gillespie 231.
[29] Gillespie 231.

Company of Ireland. According to Ruth Barton, the work of the FCOI was "deeply indebted to the tradition established by Olcott, [yet, at the same time,] its films diverged from those of Kalem in number of respects."[30] Whereas the narratives in Olcott's films were usually "set into motion through a conflict,"[31] the indigenous historical melodramas placed emphasis on unity of all classes of Irish society against the common enemy. In this respect the FCOI works strongly reflected the political attitudes characteristic of the years leading up to the creation of the Irish Free State. Most importantly, as Barton adds, it was the strategy of "playing on the emigrant nostalgia for home"[32] which was entirely absent in the FCOI films. The steady development of the indigenous film industry, which the achievements of the FCOI promised, was then brought to a halt by the disinterest of the Irish Free State government in the cinematic production. Apart from the fact that there had not been any official support to indigenous filmmakers, the state manifested its protectionist attitude by passing the Censorship of Film Act in 1923. As Harvey O'Brien specifies, the task of the censor was "to protect the Irish people from material considered indecent, obscene, or blasphemous."[33] Thus, as he adds, "the range of subject matters addressed in Irish films became rather narrow."[34]

Only a few indigenous films were produced between the late 1920s and 1930s, all of which dealt with the events of the War of Independence. In the following decades up to 1960, the generally low production was dominated by works made by foreign filmmakers, with a mixture of indigenous and non-indigenous talent among the film personnel. Within the context of this development, the question of the general classification of Irish cinema comes inevitably to one's mind. Being aware of the complex nature of Irish culture, most of modern critics, both Irish and foreign, have agreed on the necessity to "consider not only films directed by Irish people on Ireland but also films directed by foreigners on Ireland, provided their images have been regarded as influential."[35] The broad approach, suggested within this quote by Brian McIlroy, gradually became internalized within the primary definition of the concept. In Barton's words, "[an] Irish national cinema is defined firstly as a body of films made inside and outside of Ireland that addresses both the local and diasporic cultures."[36] It is the seminal status of films such as *Man of Aran* (1934) or *The Quiet Man* (1952) – both made

[30] Ruth Barton, *Irish National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2004) 31.
[31] Barton 31.
[32] Barton 31.
[33] Harvey O'Brien, "The Identity of an Irish Cinema," *Reel Ireland*, 3rd edition, 2007, 30 Oct.2011 <http://www.ifi.ie/international/history.pdf>.
[34] Harvey O'Brien, "The Identity of an Irish Cinema," <http://www.ifi.ie/international/history.pdf>.
[35] Brian McIlroy, *Irish Cinema: An Illustrated History* (Dublin: Anna Livia Press, 1988) 8.
[36] Barton 4-5.

by foreign filmmakers of Irish descent, which then points to the legitimacy of what Gillespie calls "a 'liberal' classification system."[37] All the films produced during the above outlined period do, indeed, manifest the thematic narrowness associated with this particular era in Irish cinema. However, through the elaboration of their essentialist framework, the filmmakers have often achieved different effects of their patterns and, therefore, one cannot view these films through a unified perspective.

The late 1950s and 1960s marked an important phase in the existence of the state since, with the accession of the liberal Séan Lemass to the position of Taoiseach, the country moved away from the nationalist ideology. Moreover, it also seemed that the indigenous filmmaking industry would eventually experience some progress. However, the newly established Ardmore Studios became, as Lance Pettitt notes, "fairly quickly a hireable facility monopolized by British and US studios as a production space."[38] Among the few films produced during the decade, *Rocky Road to Dublin* (1968) is the most important one. In its criticism of the Irish state and the Church, the film directed by Peter Lennon had, in a way, foreshadowed the emergence of New Wave filmmaking in the 1970s. As the label itself suggests, the authors starting to be active at that time had gradually contributed to the formation of a steady creative strand in indigenous production. Filmmakers such as Bob Quinn, Cathal Black or Neil Jordan extensively castigated the conventions of the nationalist ideology as well as they sought to revise the stereotypical representations of Irish culture which it had produced. As a result of their innovative approach, the New Wave films, indeed, require on the side of the viewer a much more nuanced perspective than it is necessary to apply within the context of romantic representations of Ireland. Furthermore, it should be noted that during this period, the overseas film industries did not cease to influence filmmaking in Ireland. Not only had the big screen epics, such as *Ryan's Daughter* (1970), been filmed in the country by foreign production companies, but also some of the filmmakers of the New Wave had their works financed from abroad – the most prominent example is Neil Jordan's mostly British-financed *Angel* (1982). As O'Brien mentions, it was then Joe Comerford's *High Boot Benny*, released in 1993, which "was to prove the last significant film of the New Wave."[39]

Since the late 1990s, the intermingling of the indigenous and foreign film talent had obviously continued. Yet, on the top of that, the filmmakers have started abandoning the

[37] Gillespie 29.
[38] Lance Pettitt, *Screening Ireland, Film and Television Representation* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000) 38.
[39] O'Brien 12.

distinctly Irish thematic frameworks, associated predominantly with the country's conservative past. As O'Brien claims, "there was no longer any one single defining aesthetic,"[40] as it was in the case of New Wave filmmaking. As a result of this fact, Hollywood film industry moved to the centre of attention of Irish critics as the major threat to the distinctiveness of Irish cinema. Already in 1990, in a reaction to the international success of Jim Sheridan's *My Left Foot*, Kevin Rockett talked of "a displacement of what is particular to the Irish social formation on to a non-specific universalism."[41] Nine years later, Bob Quinn published in the journal *Cinéaste* an article in which he emphasizes the necessity of being critical to both the concept of nation "imagined according to the principles of the Irish-Ireland nationalism,"[42] as well as to the modernising process and its globalising force. Such pronouncements definitely have to be regarded as notable contributions to Irish film criticism. It is necessary to note that they are part of the scholars' complex concern in the creative and culturally distinct ways of dealing with the globalism and hybridity of the postmodern world in representations of Ireland on screen; they are part of their effort to instigate the realization of culturally 'authentic' Irish films. Thus, within this context, it is obvious that the accusations of universalism and a lack of national/cultural specificity should not be directly adopted as a fundamental interpretative perspective applicable unalterably to all films produced in the last two decades. As Holohan notes, this view fails "to address the complexity of the relationship between tradition and modernity, between national past and the transnational cultural and economic interactions of the present."[43] Clearly, the more recent cinematic portrayals of Ireland require the process of close reading that is open to the multiplicity of impulses interacting within the pattern of each film and that accommodates the idiosyncratic manifestations of cultural markers. To sum up, the above-presented brief account of the development of Irish cinema, indeed, fully validates the fact that for the study of this cultural field one needs to strictly adopt a broad interpretative approach. Gillespie associates himself with this assertion to such an extent that, in order to avoid generalization and essentialism which the conventional denotations might imply, he coins the term Irish-themed films and subsequently uses it throughout his publication. As the preceding pages suggest, the thesis fully considers the complex nature of both Irish identity and Irish cinema. With regard to this fact, it will treat cultural landscapes as film elements whose observation can significantly enhance the process of close reading. Overall, the thesis will focus on the

[40] O'Brien 15.
[41] Kevin Rockett, "Aspects of the Los Angelesation of Ireland," *Irish Communications Review* 1(1991): 20.
[42] Bob Quinn, "Irish Cinema at the Crossroads: A Filmmakers Symposium," *Cinéaste* xxiv. 2/3 (1999):73.
[43] Holohan 3.

realization of a non-linear, non-exclusionary analysis without abandoning the conventional terminology used in connection with cinematic representations of Ireland. Thus, the term Irish film will be retained throughout the text itself.

Finally, the range of the works selected for the analysis involves films that were released between the 1950s and the 2000s, and that were made by both Irish and foreign filmmakers. In relation to this, it is necessary to note that the thesis will not deal with cinematic representations that were produced in and that portray the cultural environment of Northern Ireland. Indeed, since the 1950s, filmmaking in the North has generated a number of films whose complex patterns work extensively with the motives of landscapes and cityscapes. As examples can be mentioned 'the landscape narrative' of Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *December Bride* (1990) or Pat Murphy and John Davies' film, set in Belfast, *Maeve* (1981). Much like most of the cinematic portrayals originating in Northern Ireland, these two films address the cultural and political conflict that persisted within the culture until the 1990s. Moreover, they link the issue of nationality with that of gender; as McLoone states, "they are concerned specifically with the place of women within the predominantly male discourse of nationalism."[44] Inevitably, an analysis of these cinematic representations requires a much broader and more complex cultural background than the thesis can actually provide within its scope. Thus, in spite of the fact that the two cultures are, indeed, strongly interconnected, the analysis will focus on films produced in, and/or concerned with the Republic of Ireland only.

1.3 An Outline of the Analysis

The analysis will be structured into two parts framed by the country and the city as the predominant settings of the selected works. John Ford's *The Quiet Man* is the first film included in the chapter devoted to 'the landscape narratives'. In spite of its rather ambivalent initial reception, since its release in 1952 *The Quiet Man* has gained a cult-like status within the context of both Irish and world cinema. Not only "[was it] in a 1996 Centenary of Cinema poll voted by *The Irish Times* readers as the best Irish film," but it also "garnered accolades from directors as diverse as [Steven] Spielberg and [Martin] Scorsese,"[45]as Gibbons notes. Unlike popular audiences and the directors, who worked with its aspects in their respective films – *E.T.* (1982) and *Raging Bull* (1980), Irish filmmakers and critics had unanimously condemned the film. Only in recent years has Gibbons, as well as other scholars, contributed

[44] Martin McLoone, *Irish Film, The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000) 116.
[45] Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 3.

through their complex interpretation of *The Quiet Man* to a more sympathetic reception of this film within the critical realm. Pointing to its self-ironic aspects, Paul Giles claims that "it is not so much a sentimental film as a film about how such sentimentality operates."[46] The representation of landscape then functions within the structure of the film as an important element through which one can perceive that, in *The Quiet Man*, Ford presents nothing else than a staged play with the nostalgic pastoral vision of Ireland. Another film selected for the analysis is *Ryan's Daughter* (1970) by David Lean, a British filmmaker known for producing a range of large-screen epic narratives. In the case of the story set around Rosy Ryan, a romantic day-dreamer who lives apart from the gossiping village community, Lean had decided for the Irish context so that he could exploit the beauties of the wild nature in the West of the country. Indeed, landscape plays a crucial role in *Ryan's Daughter*, both in terms of the characters' delineation and the depiction of action. It is the elaboration of the link between unrestrained irrational behaviour and the wilderness of landscape and climate which represents the main reason behind the critical reception of the film as a generally stereotypical portrayal, in which, as Gibbons notes, "the aesthetic euphoria of the scenery […] dwarfs characters and [where] tragedy and moral conflict alike dissolve."[47] Importantly enough, as in the case of *The Quiet Man*, the positive reactions of audiences have not corresponded to these accusations. The last film dealt with in the chapter is *Poitín* (1978). This work of Irish filmmaker, Bob Quinn, was groundbreaking for two reasons. Firstly, its script – set around an old poteen-maker living in Connemara with his daughter and employing two outcasts to sell his product – was the first to receive The Arts Council's Film Script Award in 1977. Secondly, it was the first feature film produced entirely in Irish Gaelic. The very use of the ancient language definitely contributes to the overall complexity of the film, which manages to shatter the stereotypical romantic vision of the West of Ireland and, at the same time, it retains a sense of cultural distinctiveness. In *Poitín*, the landscape representation forms a significant layer of meaning through which the filmmaker manages to demythologize the West of Ireland without undermining its status of a real and culturally important place.

As for the second analysis chapter, it will deal with two urban cinematic portrayals. In Roddy Doyle's *The Commitments* (1991), the northside working-glass suburb of Dublin represents the primary symbolic field around which the overall pattern of the film is structured. Perceiving soul music as the expression of their daily experience of the city, the

[46] Paul Giles, "The Cinema of Catholicism: John Ford and Robert Altman," *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, ed. Lester D. Friedman (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991) cited from Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 96.

[47] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 229.

characters decide to establish a band whose name constitutes the title of the film itself. As a part of this process, they turn the image of their native environment to an advantage by using it as a means of marketing the band. Thus, even though *The Commitments* eventually break up, this form of creativity provides the bleak urban environment with the ethos of temporary liberation. It is through the representation of the Northside in *The Commitments* that one can perceive Parker's tendency to elaborate this story along the Hollywood aesthetics. Owing to the resulting slickness of its pattern, the film has been widely criticized, yet, at the same time, it also won popularity among millions of people worldwide. The predominance of the latter attitude is then manifested in the excited reactions to the concerts organized this year by the band members, reunited after twenty-one years. Finally, the last work to be analyzed is John Crowley's *Intermission* (2003). By presenting a collection of intersecting tales, in which the characters strive to fill gaps in their lives through a conscious structuring of their identities, *Intermission* definitely manages to capture the idiosyncratic and transitional nature of postmodern Irish society. Crowley's approach to the representation of the city then functions as an essential element contributing to the overall complex pattern of *Intermission*. Although the setting is clearly defined in the opening credits, in the rest of the film the suburb functions as a completely generic fragmented semantic space in which the lives of the characters constantly intertwine. As Neil Mitchell claims, "the city through Crowley's eyes is a place where landmark locations are for visitors [...] and where its heart and soul is found in the minutiae of everyday life."[48]

[48] Neil Mitchell, "*Intermission*," *World Film Locations: Dublin*, Jez Conolly, Caroline Whelan, eds. (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2011) 80.

2 The Cultural Background

In one of the videos used by the Tourism Ireland agency in its campaign in 2009, a young couple intends to attend the oyster festival held in Galway. Opening with the image of the city's bustling streets, the tourism commercial, bearing the slogan "*Go Where Ireland Takes You*,"[49] then suddenly slows its pace by focusing on the very journey of the would-be festival visitors. As they cycle through the Connacht region, the two travellers become completely captivated by the breathtaking scenery as well as by the all-permeating ancestral atmosphere of the landscape. Not only do they spend time on a visit to a local man, whom they meet as he is gathering turf for fire, but they also suspend their trip to admire the ruins of an ancient cottage. Both the intercut images of its long-gone inhabitants as well as the background sound of an Irish frame drum, bodhrán, then serve as features emphasizing the notion of a spontaneous journey leading back to the cultural roots of the country rather than to the planned destination with its contemporary ways of amusement. Overall, the tourism commercial conveys the image of Ireland as a country situated among the currents of the postmodern world, yet, which can still resort to its westernmost rural territory as a homogenous repository of its distinct national identity. Interestingly enough, such a portrayal of the West of Ireland clearly manifests that the contemporary indigenous tourism industry markets the very symbolic structure whose roots can be found in the rather painful colonial history as well as whose subsequent development has been part of variously complicated, often contradictory and paradoxical, social processes. The second chapter of the thesis aims to fully describe the complexity of the socio-cultural background behind this unified advertising image, and to observe the implications of its existence among postmodern indigenous cultural representations. For this purpose, the following section will deal further with the issues already outlined in the first chapter; particularly, it will present some examples of the colonial 'landscape narratives' and will further elaborate on and elucidate the facts concerning the role of romantic representations of Ireland in the context of both the Irish Cultural Revival and cultural nationalism of the Irish Free State. The focus of the study will then move further along the timeline – from the 1950s onwards. Thus, as a whole, the second chapter aims to provide a complex and coherent account of socio-cultural development in Ireland since the late colonial period. As the overall framework represented by the particular

[49] *Go Where Ireland Takes You*, Tourism Ireland marketing brand, 2009, 30 sec <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZkvseSr460 >.

'landscape' tourism commercial suggests, it will, indeed, be an account structured mainly around those socio-cultural aspects that relate directly to the content of the thesis and that will subsequently serve as an important basis for the analysis of the selected films.

As the first chapter has revealed, it was the very phenomenon of tourism that played the key role in the emergence of the romantic vision of the Irish landscape. According to W.H.A. Williams, "during the eighteenth century the stimulus for travel changed as the old didactic, socio-historical focus of the Grand Tour was gradually replaced by a fascination with scenery."[50] With the increasing interest in the landscape aesthetics in Europe, the technique of the picturesque then gradually developed. Embracing both of the previously existing concepts of the beautiful and the sublime, the picturesque served as a visual framework which allowed the travellers to engage imaginatively with scenery; it enabled them to study landscape as if it were a picture. Gibbons claims that, through its emphasis on the superiority of visual perception over the social mediation of language, the picturesque technique produces a realist effect; "[...] [the sense of] lucidity of a realist perspective then allows the external observer to gain control over a strange, disconcerting environment by seeing it as a manifestation of authenticity."[51] Importantly enough, this approach, as Williams notes, inevitably entails the viewer's distance from "the contents of a scene."[52] Thus, as he adds, it seems unsurprising that "in a society in which land was still the basis for power and wealth,"[53] this depersonalising concept became infused extensively with ideological meaning; as has been already mentioned in the first chapter, in the case of Ireland, it obviously concerned the colonial status of the country. Since the picturesque had provided the viewer with a sense of mastery and superiority, as well as with the confidence to impose judgement, one would logically assume that it was mainly the English landowners who claimed the right to this particular perspective in Irish context. Yet, during the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, most of the picturesque representations of Irish landscape originated from British travel writers who had no estate in Ireland. Williams explains this fact by stating that the abilities associated with describing a picturesque landscape "complemented a society that was sorting and rearranging itself in terms of class and status."[54] In this sense, "the viewpoint fostered by the picturesque had been offering […] the middle-class travellers an important

[50] W.H.A. Williams, *Tourism, Landscape and the Irish Character: British Travel Writers in the Pre-Famine Ireland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008) 22.
[51] Luke Gibbons, "Romanticism, Realism and Irish Cinema," *Cinema and Ireland*, eds. Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, John Hill (London: Taylor &Francis, 1987) 206.
[52] Williams 28.
[53] Williams 21.
[54] Williams 25.

element of personal control over the external world."[55] Overall, the picturesque represented, in the scholar's words, a concept which involved "a complex series of social and cultural assumptions embedded within what appeared to be simply an aesthetic approach to nature."[56]

With regard to such explication, it seems rather logical that the issue of the relationship between past and present had been interwoven into the picturesque perspective. This fact is clearly palpable in the writings focused on the ancient ruins in Ireland. Both antiquarians and travellers saw the architectural remnants existing in the English landscape as the manifestations of the historical continuity of the nation, as well as an important background against which the rapid progress of the country during the Industrial Revolution could be demonstrated. By contrast, as Williams claims:

> The icons of Irish tourism – the dolmens [and] the round towers, [...] – did not just represent Ireland's past; they represented its present as well, underscoring the country's apparent backwardness.[57]

Obviously enough, the situation was much more complicated for the Anglo-Irish travel writers. These had invoked the sense of continuity through their depictions of the ruins as symbols of the Protestant victory in Ireland. Furthermore, historical landscapes conceived in this way were closely related to another category of cultural landscapes emerging in the travel writings of that time. The so-called confessional landscapes reflected the fact that Catholicism was seen by the English as an obsolete religion infused with bigotry and superstition. Most importantly then, regardless of their particular focus and diction, both 'historical and confessional landscapes narratives' shared a common feature – they conveyed the sense of otherness of Irish culture. Within the context of this fact, it is necessary to note that it was not only nature as such that was subjected to analysis. Its inhabitants became depersonalised objects as soon as they were caught in the tourist gaze. As a result of the above-depicted visual processes, the Irish were simply turned into aspects of a picture produced by a particular travel writer. Watching peasants returning home after a day at work, Mary Frances Dickson wrote:

> The figures moving along the sand – groups of people returning home after the labours of the day [...] – all these, with their long shadows [...], looked in the peculiar light more like the creation of some glowing southern landscape than the sober realities of the day.[58]

---

[55] Williams 30.
[56] Williams 31.
[57] Williams 37.
[58] Mary Francis Dickson, "Letters from the Coast of Clare," *Dublin University Magazine* 28 (July-December 1941) cited from W.H.A Williams, *Tourism, Landscape and the Irish Character* 57.

Such a portrayal draws attention to the very defining feature of the picturesque technique, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. The author was obviously aware of the "sober realities" of peasant life. However, as Williams notes, "by turning the scene into an Italianate painting, she [managed] to minimize the socioeconomic realities that threatened to overwhelm her narrative."[59] Indeed, the hardship experienced by Irish peasants was either completely ignored in the rural idylls, or the picturesque technique helped the authors to distance themselves from such conditions. As Williams succinctly explains:

> The pictorial influences on the tourists' gaze allowed the travel writers to encapsulate a scene, to frame it, and then to abruptly divert the narrative at an appropriate moment, thereby avoiding additional observations that might spoil the effect.[60]

The status of Irish peasants as depersonalised objects, forming an integral part of these sanitized portrayals, meant that, with the peasant riots spreading throughout the country at the turn of the nineteenth century, character traits and behaviour of the Irish had become gradually perceived as reflections of the wild untameable nature as well as of the erratic weather conditions in the country. As a result of this fact, there emerged quite a few stereotypes that were usually well-established in the tourist's mind upon arriving in Ireland. For example, both Gaelic and Hiberno-English were seen by British visitors as the source of confusion and misunderstanding between themselves and the natives; this condition was obviously defined as a 'blunder' on the side of the Irish. Having asked for a pin to repair his coat, Leitch Ritchie, a journalist and writer, listened to the following response: "Is it a wroiting pin, Sir?"[61] In reaction to this situation, the traveller then immediately presented it as an example of Irish carelessness and impetuousness. The stereotype concerning the form and the sound of speech was inherently linked with the image of the Irish as merry peasants who, as Williams notes, "laugh in the face of adversity."[62] Moreover, it was a propensity to drinking and fighting which had been widely associated with the Irish. However, not only did the travellers not have to feel endangered by the rows that usually took place among the natives themselves, but it is also notable that they rarely had a chance to experience these situations in reality. Still, as William notes,

[59] Williams 56.
[60] Williams 58.
[61] Leitch Ritchie, *Ireland, Picturesque and Romantic* 2 (London: Longman, 1837): 154-155, cited from *Tourism […]* 59.
[62] Williams 65.

> [they] were fascinated by the so called faction fights – vaguely organized types of mayhem that, by the nineteenth century, seemed to set the Irish apart from other inhabitants of the United Kingdom.[63]

To sum up, the above-presented aspects of the accounts produced by British travellers in Ireland during the pre-famine era clearly show that the picturesque aesthetic approach to landscape served the imperial power as a means to convey its perception of the Irish as a primitive culture existing in harmony with nature and innocent of contemporary civilization; a culture which at the same time epitomized strangeness, otherness, exoticism and, most importantly, also unpredictability in the eyes of the English. It seems then all the more surprising that the romantic vision of the Irish landscape – originally employed by the colonizers in their effort to strengthen their superior position in Ireland – still has its place in the indigenous tourism industry. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the stereotypical view of an Irishman as a comic figure has been subjected to unceasing revisionist inquiry, it still occasionally functions as one of the cultural mediators in tourism representations. In her detailed analysis of a bus tour to the Wicklow Mountains, Annette Jorgensen cites one of the tour-guides elaborating on the image of the Irish as people who are fun, but cannot be trusted. In a joking manner, he promises the members of the tour that: "[He] will tell them lots of lies."[64] This rather paradoxical cultural aspect will be left aside for now since the analysis aims to proceed chronologically. Yet, when it finally reaches the postmodern era, the persistence of such forms of tourist representation will inevitably become much clearer and more logical.

However, first of all, it is necessary to take a closer look at other important stages in the development of the romantic image of the Irish landscape. As has already been said, romantic primitivism became internalized within the pattern of Irish cultural nationalism, whose development culminated at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth century with the Irish Cultural Revival. During these decades, the symbolism associated with landscape and its peasant culture became part of a cultural tumult which had initially started with an effort to extricate the issue of national identity from the political context, and which eventually escalated into what has been labelled 'The Battle of Two Civilizations.' In the 1880s and the early 1890s, a number of organizations emerged whose primary aim was, as Foster points out,

---

[63] Williams 70.

[64] Annette Jorgensen, "The Power of the Gaze: Negotiating Tourist and Native Identities," *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture and Identity*, eds. Michael Cronin and Barbara O'Connor (Clevedon: Cromwell Press, 2003) 145.

"the re-establishment of Irish language, Irish pastimes, as well as of an Irish ethos."[65] It was then the Gaelic League which held the central position among this group. On the occasion of its establishment in 1892, the leading figure of the League, Douglas Hyde, a Protestant scholar from County Roscommon, gave a famous lecture whose core was structured around the idea of de-anglicization. Although the term as such obviously carries political connotations, the true focus of Hyde's concept was an awakening of self-pride which would issue from the culture itself; the scholar simply aimed to stimulate the emergence of nationalism that would not define some of the citizens as 'un-Irish'; he wanted to encourage patriotism that would addressed all levels of Irish society. As it becomes obvious from Kiberd's analysis of the movement, Hyde's aspirations were, indeed, fundamentally based on the process of regeneration of Irish Gaelic as the native language. Yet, the scholar himself was not in principle opposed to the aspects of modernity as well as to the notion of hybridity associated with the Anglo-Irish, English speaking population in Ireland. The popularity of his movement had been rising over the years and its activity was successful in many ways. Yet, with the increasing power of the Catholic Church over the socio-political development in Ireland, it was becoming more and more difficult to maintain its apolitical status. As a result of these processes, the patriotism cultivated by the Gaelic League had begun to be defined strictly in terms of Catholicism and Gaelicism, and eventually it was used in a rather radical campaign against the Anglo-Irish writers of the Literary Revival.

This situation emerged in spite of the fact that these authors had shared the principal ideas of the Celtic Revival; the West of Ireland with its landscape enshrining the roots of the ancient culture had represented for them the essential source of cultural regeneration. As Declan Kiberd notes, "[even] before the Gaelic League held its founding meeting,"[66] Yeats had expressed his ideas about the building of a national tradition. He believed that the English language would actually play a highly positive role in such a process. According to him, through the translations of the old Irish literature, as well as through thematic exploration of the Gaelic culture, one could achieve a literary form which would not, in Kiberd's words, "be indentured to any cause, whether of nation or of art, a form […] that would seem but an aspect of daily life."[67] From this quote it can be clearly interfered that the hybrid nature of the innovative literary form represented the primary interest for Yeats. However, it was the very features of such innovativeness – the openness and versatility of the text – that represented the

[65] R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Penguin Books, 1989) 450.
[66] Kiberd 155.
[67] Kiberd 139.

actual reason behind the enraged reaction of the audience who faced, in Emer Nolan's words, "the image of Mayo peasants lionising a man they believe to be a murderer"[68] in Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. According to Kiberd, "in [Synge's] hands, the meaning of Gaelic tradition changed from something museumized to something modifiable, endlessly open."[69] As his statement suggests, the Anglo-Irish writers had, indeed, rejected the particular mode of romantic representation in which the emphasis on transparency and authenticity conceals the existing control over a presented socio-cultural vision. Manifesting the allegorical tendencies that had already emerged in Irish Romanticism at the beginning of nineteenth century, their romantic vision values landscape as a layer of social meaning, which can, in Gibbons's words, function as an opaque, "envious veil […] [complicating] instant or immediate access" – an element which can help to undermine the attempts to impose definite meaning as "an essential, indubitable truth."[70] It can be said then that it was this particular form of representation which then fuelled the gradually increasing ostracizing attitude of the 'Irish-Irelanders' towards the Anglo-Irish writers. In D.P.Moran's words:

> [T]he Irish nation [was] de facto a Catholic nation and the Protestant Ascendancy, no matter how they learnt, spoke and wrote Irish, or repudiated the ethos of their class and caste, would be considered fundamentally un-Irish.[71]

Kiberd observes that, in reaction to this radical atmosphere within the cultural nationalist circles, Yeats began to openly present his "Irish revival as a revolt against a provincialism of mind which can sometimes inhere in imitative nationalism, […]."[72] Interestingly enough, in spite of his complex vision of the nationalist aspirations, Yeats, as well as the other Anglo-Irish literary revivalists, such as Synge and Russell, became eventually included in what Joyce called the "mummifying company;"[73] Yeats's idealistic romanticism was then rejected as was the narrow-mindedness of the radical cultural nationalists. At first, the criticism emerged among some of his contemporaries, the modernist writers; later, the revivalist practices were even more severely denounced by the naturalists/counter-revivalists such as Patrick Kavanagh or Séan O'Faoláin. In relation to this, Gibbons mentions that the members of the Abbey Theatre, active in the Literary Revival, had earlier "dismissed Boucicault's

---

[68] Emer Nolan, "Modernism and the Irish Revival," *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, eds. Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 159.
[69] Kiberd 187.
[70] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 241.
[71] D.P.Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (1905), cited from R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* 454.
[72] Kiberd 161.
[73] Nolan 164.

'realism' as 'the home of buffoonery and sentiment'."[74] Thus, according to him, the revisionist reaction to the work of Yeats and of other members of the Literary Revival demonstrates "the cyclical nature of 'realist breakthroughs' from the enclosing myths and 'distortions' of romanticism in Ireland."[75] Moreover, from Gibbons's other essays one can gain an even more complex notion of the cultural representations produced during the literary renaissance; as it becomes obvious from his writings on Irish modernists, one should avoid strict categorization, drawing a line between the romanticism of Yeats and realism of Joyce. Indeed, the scholar has contributed strongly to the revision of Joyce's status as an author who had abandoned all aspects of the cultural tradition associated with the nationalist essentialism and fled towards the fragmented state of modernity on the Continent. His observations concerning Joyce's complex relationship to the past and to his own culture will be presented later on, in connection with the cultural debate that evolved in Ireland in the late twentieth century. As for the period of the Cultural Revival, to which the previous pages have been devoted, it is necessary to emphasize that in spite of the eventual course of events, the Gaelicist organizations occurring at that time were primarily of a cultural, not political, character. Overall, as an inseparable part of the search for a distinct cultural identity, the process of landscape representation became involved in highly complex, often rather intense and radical, socio-cultural practices during the Revival; this fact in itself draws one's attention even more strongly to the status of the depicted contemporary tourist advertisement, presenting the unified and controlled vision behind which a much more complicated cultural subject matter has formed for centuries.

As for the direct impact of the Revival on the decades to follow, it can be seen in the rhetoric it had provided for the nationalists in the Irish Free State. In the early post-independence period, the particular form of romantic primitivism that is framed through the picturesque technique gained dominance in Irish culture. In the state where the public discourse was firmly based on the ideology of the rural, the symbolic structure started to be used for hegemonic purposes. As Tricia Cusack states, the official version of cultural landscape, "'emptied' of critical contents,"[76] had been presented as an authentic image of Irish culture. It is then the enthusiastic reception of R. J. Flaherty's film, *Man of Aran* (1934), by the officials of the State which gives a proof to the fact that such an image of rural idyll had served the nationalists in the Free State as a primary means for the reproduction of their

[74] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 212.
[75] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 212.
[76] Tricia Cusack, "A 'Countryside Bright with Cosy Homesteads': Irish Nationalism and the Cottage Landscape," *National Identities* 3 (2001): 234.

rhetoric. The film, in which, according to Gibbons, "the everyday grind of work and production is desocialised and transformed into a heroic struggle between humanity and nature,"[77] was seen as an accurate portrayal with the power to rehabilitate the image of Irish people. Paradoxically enough, it was Irish peasants, the people whose "spartan lifestyle,"[78] in Gibbons's words, was celebrated within the film, who were in their struggle with nature affected most severely by the results of de Valera's protectionist policy. The anti-materialist attitude of the political establishment had arisen partly from the concerns of the Catholic Church as well as it was based on the unceasing effort to differentiate the State from Britain. The protectionism was not only economically orientated; as was shown in the first chapter, the development of cinematic culture in Ireland was restrained by the publication of the Censorship of Film Act in 1923. In the same way, popular music and press were subjected to the nationalist campaign. As for the status of literary production, McLoone notes that the 1929 Censorship of Publication Act "resulted in banning of a host of major international writers from Faulkner, Hemingway and Bellow to Proust [etc.]."[79] As he adds, "the Irish authors suffered particularly, including Joyce, Beckett, O'Casey, Frank O'Connor, Séan O'Faoláin [and others]."[80]

Surprisingly enough, in the realm of the visual arts, two Anglo-Irish modernist authors, Jack Yeats and Paul Henry, were strongly acclaimed. According to Cusack, these artists were supported mainly because of the fact that the themes they worked with "subscribed to the state's particular policy of 'ethnic identification.'"[81] Indeed, Jack Yeats, the brother of the famous writer, had often dealt with Celtic mythology in his paintings; as for Paul Henry, his modernist technique helped him to produce unified, natural-looking rural idylls in which countryside cottages had the central role. As Cusack notes, Henry's picturesque cottage landscapes, "eliding areas of the real every-day experience," gradually gained the status of symbols and the artist himself was positioned into the role of "'almost the official artist of the Free State.'"[82] Henry then painted the portraits of various representatives of The Free State, his pictures of thatched cottages were used for the first Irish Free State Handbook (1932) and he also designed tourist posters promoting the West of Ireland. Within the context of the last mentioned activity of this artist, it should be noted that, since the late colonial times, tourism

[77] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 201.
[78] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 201.
[79] Martin McLoone, *Irish Film, The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000) 26.
[80] McLoone 26.
[81] Cusack 231.
[82] Cusack 231.

as such has retained its significant status within the process of mediating of the romantic image of Ireland. Definitely contributing to this fact was the existence of populous root-communities all over the world, whose members yearned for various cultural representations that would answer their feelings of nostalgia. Tourist portrayals of Ireland had not been produced only in the country itself; actually, with regard to the productivity of the colonial travel writers as well as to the moderate outward presentation supported by the Free State, it can be generally said that the tourist representations from outside the country had, in the long term, dominated those indigenous ones. Henry's cottage landscapes then greatly exceeded the status of mere tourist images; as the symbols of national identity, they helped the government in its persistent effort to maintain its anti-modern, traditionalist stance. The intensity of the diligence to such an attitude was manifested, according to Cusack, in the way the symbolism was worked with as modernity inevitably reached the country in the 1920s, when the ambitious hydro-electric scheme on the river Shannon was built. She notes that "Special Issue postage stamps in 1930-1931 depicted the Shannon scheme but also a peasant bearing a scythe."[83] Also in the *Saorstát Eireann Official Handbook*, the hydro-electric scheme was scarcely mentioned and images of picturesque landscape dominated the publication. The government had simply persisted in the promotion of the rural in spite of the rather small, yet, existing, industrial progress. The Taoiseach himself was, indeed, most strongly committed to the vision of the pre-modern rural idyll. Cusack gives a proof to this fact by presenting his famous St. Patrick's Day speech from 1943. She emphasizes that although de Valera spoke at a time when the whole of Europe was much concerned about its future, he chose to "focus on the [ideas] rooted in the past,[…] articulating a vision of Ireland in terms which evoked a pre-modern golden age of Christian devotion and simple non-materialist living.[84]

The hegemony of de Valera's ideology then dissolved definitively with the accession of Sean Lemass to the position of the Taoiseach in 1958. In Cormac Ó'Gráda's words, the 'Lemass Era' "established […] a commitment to outward-looking policies, […] and a willingness to experiment"[85] – a pattern which subsequently brought about economic growth in the country. Although many problems remained in Irish society, the 1960s and 1970s were generally perceived as rather satisfying decades. In the later stage of this period, the influence of revisionism became rather prominent. It was then Cruise O'Brien's 1973 proposal – suggesting the extension of RTÉ broadcasting to Northern Ireland as well as the establishment

[83] Cusack 232.
[84] Cusack 232.
[85] Cormac Ó'Gráda, *Rocky Road: The Irish Economy Since the 1920s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) cited from McLoone, *Irish Film [...]* 88.

of a channel relaying British television all over the country – which aroused opposition to the modernising aspirations on the side of the anti-revisionists, "a loose coalition of different nationalist opinion,"[86] according to McLoone. Having defined such a proceeding as a sacrifice of national identity to the forces of international capitalism, the anti-revisionists "initiated a discourse that was to become an important element of the cultural debate of the last two decades of the twentieth century,"[87] as he adds. Already, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, this opposition had fully transferred into the public sphere in the form of an increasing animosity between the liberal and the conservative section of Irish society. In the period when the country was back in recession and the violence in Northern Ireland had escalated, two particular events symbolized this antagonism. McLoone observes that:

> [In] March 1979 nearly one million PAYE workers marched throughout the country in protest at a punitive tax regime […] which favoured farmers at the expense of industrial workers [...], [and] in September, one million people gathered in Phoenix Park in Dublin to attend the mass celebrated by the Pope.[88]

Moreover, in the 1980s, the breach widened when a series of scandals and controversies associated with the Catholic Church was revealed. As McLoone succinctly notes: "Rural and urban Ireland, now increasingly seen to represent respectively tradition and modernity, had rarely seemed so far apart."[89] It was the subsequent course of events which then fully reinvigorated the attitude of the modernisers. Not only had the economy been growing again since the late 1980s, but also a few victories were achieved at that time over the Catholic conservative power in the country in the legal realm. As a reaction to these processes, the modernisers immediately begun to denounce Irish cultural traditions, inherently linked with the era of rigorist nationalism, as the primary source of such a strong slowdown in progress as seen in the previous decade. A completely antithetical opinion could be then heard from the proponents of post-colonialism. As Pettitt claims:

> The postcolonial theory offers a critique of Irish nationalism without denying that ideology's historical origins, characterising it as colonially imitative and flawed, but a necessary stage in deconstructing colonial definitions of the relationship between Britain and Ireland.[90]

[86] McLoone 95.
[87] McLoone 95.
[88] McLoone 101.
[89] McLoone 101.
[90] Lance Pettitt, *Screening Ireland, Film and Television Representation* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000) 50 .

Indeed, as McLoone notes, the members of the Field Day group, such as Gibbons, Quinn and Eagleton, perceive cultural traditions as "the manifestation of the pain suffered and the resistance offered to the traumas of colonial oppression."[91] According to them, these aspects should not be abandoned but worked with since they provide an efficient means of retaining a distinct national identity within a world dominated by cultural globalism. In their view, McLoone adds, tradition simply represents a "driving force rather than a bulwark against progress and [modernity]."[92] It was Gibbons who provided a complex analysis of Joyce's work in order to prove this assertion. According to this leading post-nationalist, "Irish society did not have to await the twentieth century to undergo the shock of modernity [since] disintegration and fragmentation were already part of its [colonial] history […]."[93] In relation to the "avant-garde tradition" of Joyce and Beckett, Gibbons then claims that these authors "carried with them the 'nightmare of Irish history.'"[94] Thus, according to him, the modernist writers did not reject Irish rural tradition while resorting to urban modernity. The past is an inextricable part of the cultural mosaics they have created within their work. As Gibbons notes in connection with *Ulysses*, the past was for Joyce a source of both attraction and repulsion. Overall, it is this complex vision of the relationship between – the past and the present, tradition and modernity as well as the rural and the urban – which represents the chief concern for the post-nationalist scholars; they see this approach as a fruitful means to achieve the creation of distinct cultural representations.

The adherence to this concept can be then observed in many modern/postmodern Irish authors from various cultural realms. For example, *The Rough Field*, John Montague's poem cited on the opening page of the thesis, indeed, manifests the poet's complex vision of Irish culture, just as *Poitín*, Bob Quinn's film included in the following analysis, does. Among visual artists, Sean Hillen can be also mentioned as the one whose postcard collages and photomontages represent particularly interesting examples of such an approach to representation of Irish culture. In one of the images from the series titled *Irelantis* (1994-98), Hillen inserts a thatched cottage, the symbol of romantic Ireland, onto the Meeting House Square in the fashionable Dublin area, The Temple Bar. The cottage is actually the birthplace of Sean Thornton, the hero from Ford's famous film *The Quiet Man*. Placing this building, constructed for the purposes of the film shooting only, in front of a crowd of people, who observe it in relaxed postures as if seated in front of a television, Hillen clearly wants to make

[91] McLoone 104.
[92] McLoone 104.
[93] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press: 1996) 6.
[94] Gibbons, *Transformations* 6.

us realize that the image of rural idyll was conceived in the urban environment. To sum up, the cultural debate of the 1980s and 1990s definitely represents a significant aspect of the post-nationalist socio-cultural development in Ireland; it is important for the thesis itself since within its context, film portrayals can be more fully understood. However, it is also necessary to emphasize yet again that, as McLoone states, such "debate has been conducted largely within academia, having no direct impact on the daily-life of society as such."[95]

It is then the existence of the tourism commercial presented at the beginning of this chapter which clearly manifests that the disputation between the modernisers and the post-colonialists has not had an unmitigated impact within all spheres of Irish society. In her essay, Jorgensen provides an explication of the fact that the romantic vision of Ireland, carrying with it many stereotypes, has retained its position within postmodern indigenous tourist discourse, in spite of the thorough reevaluation and reassessment to which it has been subjected over the decades. Jorgensen states that the various media, as well as agents operating within the postmodern tourism industry, can work with multiple frameworks; for example, they can employ a rather scientific historical approach or, in case of individual tour guides, personal experience can also be added. Still, being part of the complex international touristic discourse, the narrative they convey has to, at least partly, "rely on pre-existing cultural [representations]."[96] As the preceding pages have revealed, in this sense, the romantic vision of Ireland represents a symbolic structure which had been employed for centuries; it is a well-established framework which inherently embraces a rather complicated socio-cultural background. This essentialist touristic perspective can be then elaborated in different ways, which fact can be, after all, observed in the development of touristic discourse in Ireland during the second half of the twentieth century.

Ireland of the Welcomes, the magazine established by the Irish Tourist Board in 1952, represented the key medium of the government in its effort to regenerate tourism in the post-nationalist era. Actually, in its early decades, *Ireland of the Welcomes* could be qualified as a literary journal since it published extensively the work of authors such as Benedict Kiely, Brendan Behan, Séan O'Faoláin, Donagh McDonagh and others. According to Michael Cronin, the magazine aimed to "represent Ireland for those who cannot come there as well as to excite an interest in the potential visitor of the country."[97] As he adds, "it [was] the writers alone who legitimised its claims to be representative and authoritative in the establishment of

[95] McLoone 106.
[96] Jorgensen 138.
[97] Michael Cronin, "Imagining Ireland: The Construction of Tourist Representations," *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture and Identity*, Michael Cronin and Barbara O'Connor , eds. (Clevedon: Cromwell Press, 2003) 181.

a specifically Irish touring culture."[98] *Ireland of the Welcomes* had built upon the tradition of the connection between the literary form and tourism in Ireland. With its merging of literature and advertisement, it represented a clear example of the aestheticization of the commercial substance of tourism, a process which has gradually become an inextricable part of this industry. The enduring popularity of the magazine can be, according to Cronin, ascribed to the rather sophisticated way through which the magazine elaborated "the tourist propaganda."[99] Its editors were apparently well aware of the fact that modern tourists are conscious of the constructed nature of touristic discourse and that they can critically work with this knowledge without "abandoning the touristic messages about Ireland [as such]."[100] Thus, in the early decades of the magazine's existence, they published the writings of authors such as Séan O'Faoláin, who presented his rather critical stance towards the essentialist sentimental vision of Ireland. As Cronin states, this approach, indeed, appealed to "the increasingly self-reflexive consumers of cultural products."[101] However, as the scholar notes, with the gradual transition towards visual representations in the postmodern culture, *Ireland of the Welcomes* became fully based on the displaying of the very sceneries O'Faoláin commented on ironically. According to Cronin, the magazine turned into a "colour supplement,"[102] which strives to keep the romantic image of Ireland as well as to draw the attention of the tourists to the fact that, due to the country's rapid economic development of recent years, Ireland offers both the experience of rural idyll as well as all the luxuries of modern life.

Such a development in Irish tourism industry is then clearly manifested by the above-presented commercial. The video employs the essentialist vision of Ireland in its full complexity, displaying all the central themes Jorgensen reveals in her analysis. Firstly, it presents "Ireland as a place of unspoilt beauty." Secondly, it also draws attention to the fact that Ireland "remains old-fashioned and traditional"- a place one can escape to from the tumult of modern life. Finally, it also conveys the image of the Irish as "friendly, talkative, entertaining [and, most importantly, hospitable people]."[103] Watching the commercial, one can definitely agree with Cronin's claim that unlike the earlier forms of tourism representations based on literature and language, such contemporary tourist portrayals do not

[98] Cronin 181.
[99] Cronin 188.
[100] Jorgensen 150.
[101] Cronin 188.
[102] Cronin 181.
[103] Jorgensen 145.

"actively invite the viewer to an engagement with the image."[104] The scholar then qualifies "the wordless communion of musical 'craic' (which can be passively observed)"[105] as a symbol of postmodern tourist rhetoric. Within the context of this fact, it is then necessary to note that the image of Ireland conveyed by the conventional rhetoric of tourism cannot fully control the tourist gaze. According to Jorgensen, postmodern tourists work with a number of frameworks just as the various agents and media producing touristic representations do. Apart from the fact that they draw on touristic discourse and that they are able to respond critically to it, tourists also involve their own "cultural experience within their interpretations"[106] of the messages they receive. Thus, as a result of such intertextuality, the power to control is neither on the side of the producer nor on that of the receiver of the narrative. As Jorgensen succinctly concludes, "the meaning of Irishness is [then] actively negotiated,"[107] resulting in heterogeneous interpretations. To sum up, on the basis of this account, it can be assumed that the image of Ireland embedded within romantic primitivism represents a necessary, yet, not all-powerful, means of cultural mediation in the tourism industry. Most importantly then, its continuing existence within some fields of Irish culture clearly manifests that postmodern Irish society as such, indeed, represents a highly complex mosaic. As Gillespie claims:

> The nation's colonial and postcolonial traumas as well as its economic struggles and triumphs have produced well-documented attitudes and patterns of behaviour. They reflect an Irish sense of self in which traditional and homogenous attitudes coexist with a sophisticated cosmopolitanism.[108]

It is then the process of social construction of place which has been deeply rooted within all the above mentioned stages in the development of Irish culture and which, therefore, plays the key role in its pattern in the twenty-first century as well. Overall, with regard to the account presented in this chapter, it can be said that, in Ireland, representations of cultural landscapes function as strong contextual elements which can significantly facilitate the analysis of cinematic portrayals of the culture.

[104] Cronin 186.
[105] Cronin 186.
[106] Jorgensen 152.
[107] Jorgensen 155.
[108] Gillespie 231.

3 The Irish Landscape as the Arena of Twentieth-Century Film Representations of Ireland

3.1 Reading 'Landscape Narratives' beyond the Dichotomy between Myth and Reality

"Hey, is that real? She couldn't be!"[109] Sean Thornton cannot resist asking after seeing Mary Kate running a herd of sheep through the lush Irish landscape in John Ford's *The Quiet Man* (1952). This particular scene from the cult film definitely bears a special resonance since it shows a fictional character asking the question that has been, in Sean Ryder's words, "central to debates about Irish cinema from its beginnings."[110] In general, it can be said that the process of distinguishing between film representations that reflect reality and those that stand for constructed myths has gained a major role within the context of twentieth-century cinema. Moreover, this attitude has become strongly linked to the focus on the opposition between cultural specificity – involving both the diegetic as well as the production level of a film, and cultural universalism – arising from the increasing global interaction in the modern/postmodern world. As has already been noted, a stereotypical vision, largely from outside of the country, dominated film portrayals of Irish culture for the greater part of the twentieth century. The fall of the nationalist power, in the 1950s, was then followed by both an enthusiastic effort to break away from the traditional imagery associated with the protectionist era, as well as by a rather uncertain reception of modernity. As a result of this development, the above defined issues have become especially strongly rooted in critical debates concerning Irish film. In relation to this fact, it has to be noted that such a binary outlook is, in principle, rather misleading. Firstly, one should realize that each representation is selected and organized in some way. As Ryder states, "'realism' is as much a construction as 'romanticism;' both offer different kinds of truth perhaps, but neither represents absolute and unmediated 'truth.'"[111] Secondly, as the global film industry has grown, it has become gradually more problematic to find films that could be defined as strictly national in terms of their production. Moreover, with the increasing cosmopolitanism, the traditional themes associated with individual nations have become widely abandoned in cinematic representations. Yet, as Conn Holohan claims, this fact "does not negate the effect of [...]

[109] *The Quiet Man*, prod. Republic Pictures, dir. John Ford, 1952, 129 min.
[110] Sean Ryder, "Modernity's Other: *The Quiet Man, The Field* and *The Commitments*," *The Quiet Man..and Beyond*, Séan Crosson and Rod Stoneman, eds. (Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2009) 42.
[111] Ryder 42.

national specificities on the way filmmakers inhabit and perceive the world."[112] Thus, on the basis of these assertions, it can be clearly concluded that both the questions of the verity of a film's diegetic image and of its cultural distinctness, form, indeed, the important axes of any reflection on Irish films. However, at the same time, they should not be seen as its primary criteria. As scholars such as Gibbons have proved, they should be employed rather as loose frameworks, within which a more complex and interesting observation can be achieved, being focused on the socio-cultural context from which a film emerged, on the way its pattern is elaborated, what impulses it emanates, as well as what meaning it generates among audiences. Only this kind of attitude then wholly fulfils the principle of close reading, the process whose significance within the framework of Irish cinema was elucidated in the first chapter.

As for the following section, it will focus on representations of landscapes, the phenomena which have gained a completely new dimension in the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century and which have remained an important part of socio-cultural processes ever since. It will deal with these as elements which can contribute with a useful perspective to such non-linear reading of the selected films. With regard to this aim, it is necessary to draw attention again to Gibbon's seminal text on Romanticism and Realism in Irish cinema, which, as Eamonn Slater succinctly notes, clearly communicates the fact that "the Romantic relationship to nature was not a simple one, but a mediated relationship, which can take on many forms."[113] The two strains Gibbons identifies within the context of romantic representations of Ireland have already been revealed in detail in the course of the preceding chapters. Importantly, it remains to be mentioned that Gibbons developed his observations from the general characterization through which the German art historian, Erwin Panofsky, distinguished between two versions of the pastoral. Panofsky's concept of hard and soft primitivism provides the clear-cut categories under which the already presented features of the different romantic visions of Ireland can be subsumed. Therefore, it will be introduced at this stage as an important denominational basis for the following analysis.

Hard primitivism, according to Panofsky, "conceives of primitive life as an almost subhuman existence full of terrible hardship and devoid of all comfort – in other words, as civilised life stripped of its virtues."[114] As Gibbons observes, hard primitivism represents the form of romantic imagination that "conforms to a realist, pictorial aesthetic and which

[112] Conn Holohan, *Cinema on the Periphery, Contemporary Irish and Spanish Film* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010) 100.
[113] Eamonn Slater, "The Hidden Landscape Aesthetic of *The Quiet Man*," in *The Quiet Man...and Beyond*, 139.
[114] Erwin Panofsky, "Et in Arcadia Ego: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition," *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1995) 298, cited from Gibbons, "Romanticism, Realism and Irish Cinema," *Cinema and Ireland* 200.

[symbolizes] the vantage-point of the outsider."[115] Moreover, he adds that in its emphasis on the directness of the encounter between man and nature, this concept often abandons "all traces of mediation, particularly, […] that of language."[116] However, according to Slater, it would be definitely false to think that "this version of romantic appreciation of landscape is without its own symbolic associations […]."[117] As the second chapter of the thesis has shown, both the colonial power and the nationalist of the Irish Free State had used the picturesque technique as a means through which their respective ideologies, based on the hard primitivist vision, could be mediated.

As for the concept of soft primitivism, Panofsky states that it "conceives of primitive life as golden age of plenty, innocence and happiness – in other words, as civilised life purged of its vices."[118] Gibbon emphasizes the fact that, unlike its counterpart, soft primitivism represents a "pre-eminently social vision in which nature is overlaid with social accretions."[119] It was then this particular perspective which had formed the dominant strain in Irish romanticism. Also, it has to be noted that as an essentially insider's/native vision, soft primitivism often elaborates on the cultural motifs overlaying nature in order to undermine the outsider's controlling gaze. Through a strong intensification of the aspects that had been imposed upon the culture as essentially truthful, a soft primitivism vision produced "extremities and juxtapositions" which, in Gibbons's words "presented the greatest challenge to the organising perspective of a realist aesthetic appropriated by colonial ideology in its attempts to make Ireland 'intelligible.'"[120] The works of Dion Boucicault as well as of J.M.Synge have already been observed as examples of such form of resistance. Thus, for the purposes of the following analysis, it is most important now to emphasize Gibbons's claim that "the competing perspectives of [hard and soft primitivism had also] transferred their energies"[121] into the romantic portrayals of Ireland on screen. The already mentioned film, *The Quiet Man,* by John Ford, can be seen as one of the most famous examples of this.

3.2 The Quiet Man

The Quiet Man is a film whose realization definitely represented a dream-come-true for Ford, the Irish-American filmmaker. During the sixteen years that passed between the point when

[115] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 210.
[116] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 202.
[117] Slater 142.
[118] Panofsky 297, cited from Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 198.
[119] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 202.
[120] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 219.
[121] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 210.

he discovered the original story by Maurice Walsh and his eventual movement to Ireland, as the place chosen for shooting the film, Ford was asked by Republic Pictures to create three other films, whose success was supposed to provide the financial means necessary for the production of *The Quiet Man*. At the time when the American Republic Pictures finally started to communicate with the authorities in Ireland about the film, the country found itself at the turn of two important historical stages. According to Barry Monahan, "the shift from [De Valera's] protectionist nationalism towards internationalism"[122] was followed by the increasing effort of the State to present the country to the outside world. Monahan further adds that the activity of the newly established Boárd Failte (the Irish Tourist Board), as well as of other organisations, both at home and abroad, had "capitalised mainly on the nostalgia of Irish descendants returning to the country."[123] In his essay focused on the socio-cultural conditions within which *The Quiet Man* was conceived, Roddy Flynn reveals that the Department of External Affairs was generally antagonistic to the idea of supporting the film. Yet, as becomes obvious from Flynn's account, the State authorities were, at the same time, well aware of the fact that Ford could easily shoot the whole film in America, using the technical possibilities of interior filmmaking. Thus, eventually, interest in the financial advantages, resulting from Ireland's status as a convenient film location for foreign companies, prevailed in the State's attitude. The decision to support Ford's activities in Ireland was also significantly influenced by the notion that the authentic images of Ireland employed within the film would meet the expectations among audiences from the root communities in America. As the first chapter has revealed, the demand for the authenticity of the homeland scenery among Irish descendants was already fully apparent at the beginning of the twentieth century with the success of the films shot by the Kalem Company in Ireland. Overall, the State eventually agreed with Ford's project, yet, at the same time, this step was accompanied by its almost meticulous insistence on the necessity of controlling the reactions of audiences. These were generally positive outside of the country but, by contrast, strongly negative among native viewers. As William C. Dowling claims, "it was the film's portrayal of the tempestuous relationship between Sean Thornton and Mary Kate Danaher that met the strongest resistance."[124] The main source of this attitude was the sentence addressed by one of

[122] Barry Monahan, "Narrative Pleasures of the Visualised Nation: *The Quiet Man* and Disruptive System of Viewing," in *The Quiet Man..and Beyond* 126.
[123] Monahan 127.
[124] William C. Dowling, "John Ford's Festive Comedy: Ireland Imagined in *The Quiet Man*," *Eire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* (Fall-Winter, 2001):1.

the villagers to Sean: "Here's fine stick to beat the lovely lady."[125] However, in spite of the initial reaction, the following decades have proved that *The Quiet Man* is a film which has a central role in Irish cinema. Not only has its popularity gradually increased all over the world, Irish audiences included, but it has also come to serve as the subject for an unceasing amount of published critical work. The reception within this particular cultural sphere was then rather unequivocal; as James MacKillop notes, the critics had almost unanimously accused the film of "sentimentalism, condescension, cliché and gimcrackery."[126] Luke Gibbons was the first scholar to have provided a different perspective on Ford's achievement. Drawing attention to its pattern, he defined *The Quiet Man* as a film which, in itself, provides a reflection on the process of representation of the Irish culture. He has claimed that the narrative structure of the film, as well as its cinematic technique, serve as fundamental evidence of the fact that "what we see in *The Quiet Man* can be placed between the visual equivalent of inverted commas."[127] It is then the film's representation of landscape, arising from Ford's elaborate manipulation of mise-en-scène, which can contribute significantly to the viewer's realization that *The Quiet Man* is not, as Martin McLoone notes, "an unself-conscious recreation of a pre-modern [...] rural idyll but a postmodern play on [the status of cultural myth]."[128]

On the narrative level, Ford employs the interaction between two forms of cultural imagination. The first one has originated from the hard primitivist vision characteristic of American Romanticism; it has informed the ethos of the American Dream, as well as the principles of modern society as such. Moreover, it has also come to dominate cinematic conventions through the hegemony of the Hollywood film industry. In the second case, Ford works with the soft primitivist vision which had formed the core of Irish romanticism. As it becomes obvious from Gibbons's essay on the role of rituals in *The Quiet Man*, unlike the ethic of the modern Western world, where the vernacular rituals has been turned into generally "controlled and ruled activities,"[129] Irish culture has retained its emphasis on communality and thus it also keeps the status of rituals as the spontaneous acts of everyday life. It has to be noted then, that Ford does not assign an unquestionable authority to either of these two visions. Through the explicit interaction of the hard and soft primitivist vision – of

[125] *The Quiet Man*, dir. John Ford.
[126] James MacKillop, "The Quiet Man Speaks," *Contemporary Irish Cinema*, ed. James MacKillop (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1999) 169.
[127] Luke Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002) 19.
[128] Martin McLoone, *Irish Film, The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000) 57.
[129] Luke Gibbons, "From Inisfree to Monument Valley: Irishness and Ritual in John Ford's Westerns," in *The Quiet Man..and Beyond* 20.

the official and the vernacular, of the modern and the traditional – these attitudes are contested and questioned. Such a process then communicates one fact only: both of these perspectives are deeply rooted within the realm of culture and they are, therefore, both socially mediated. Moreover, Gibbons succinctly frames this fact through his elaborate cinematic technique which constantly undermines the status of the diegetic image as a representation of the real world. Thus, it can be generally said that in *The Quiet Man*, the viewer is simply invited to observe the way cultural vision is constructed.

The film focuses on Sean Thornton, an Irish-American who wants to escape the alienation of modernity, searching for a shelter among a traditionally based community in the country of his ancestors. In this sense, Sean can be, indeed, perceived as a protagonist who rejects certain aspects of modern American society; above all, he despises its capitalist principles since it was the mammon which brought him into the boxing ring where he killed his opponent. However, at the same time, it has to be noted that he retains within himself a great part of the American mentality, which, among other things, influences his vision of Ireland as a place where he can achieve a "fusion with nature, with a more fundamental order of things,"[130] as Gibbons remarks. However, in the village of Inisfree, the natural of hard primitivism blends with the social of soft primitivism in a way which does not allow direct access into the community. As soon as the setting and the primary impulse of the story are established in the opening scene, the viewer's attention is drawn to the fact that Sean's point of view will have a dominant position within the portrayal of the village environment. Ford communicates this by using a sequence of shots in which Sean is seen in close-up at first and, subsequently, the camera moves to the window of the train station through which the figure of Michaeleen Oge Flynn can be seen as he is placing the newcomer's luggage on the pony-trap. According to Gibbons, Ford has often used the motif of "Windows of Desire"[131] in his films. Within this context, it can be mentioned that the English photographer John Hinde worked with a similar technique in his postcard images of Ireland. Placing branches and bushes into the foreground of his pictures, Hinde explicitly indicated that these provide an insight into the nostalgic memory of the past/homeland. In *The Quiet Man*, the following scene, showing the pony-trap as it moves under the bridge with a passing train, strengthens the notion that the viewer is entering a world which is to a significant extent shaped by Sean's idealized vision of Ireland.

A few moments later, Sean and Michaeleen arrive on a bridge from which his family cottage, White O'Morn, can be seen. The first shot, in which, as Gibbons notes, "the flat and

[130] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 224.
[131] Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 80.

poorly-lit landscape signifies a back-projection,"[132] then clearly communicates to audiences that they are not in the position of what Monahan calls "sutured spectator,"[133] and that they are not, therefore, obliged to accept the following view of the cottage surrounded by greenery as an image of the reality, but rather as a reflection of Sean's mind. On the narrative level, Michaeleen emphasizes this notion by exclaiming that: "[I]t is nothing but a wee humble cottage."[134] Overall, as Gibbons claims, this scene represents the first example of "a sharp juxtaposition between hard and soft primitivism in [the film]."[135] Furthermore, Sean's nostalgic vision is belied yet again in the already mentioned episode where he first sees Mary Kate, running barefoot among a herd of sheep. Ford achieves this result by following the initial image with a shot showing Mary Kate at a low angle, smiling to herself. As this take is rather incongruous with the logic of the preceding one, it clearly points to the fact that Sean's point of view had a crucial impact on the atmosphere of Mary Kate's first appearance. It is then Michaeleen who again further emphasizes the impulses emanating from the cinematic structure of the film as he replies to Sean's question about the verity of the image: "[It]'s only a mirage brought on by your terrible thirst."[136]

According to McLoone, this particular scene clearly indicates that Sean sees Mary Kate "as the embodiment of woman at home with nature."[137] Indeed, there are many situations in the film that validate such an assertion: both the episode where the wind takes her bonnet during the horse-races, as well as the storm scene set in White O'Morn, show Mary Kate as a character whose feelings are strongly attached to the natural forces. However, as Sean gradually finds out, to his own confusion, her personality is also firmly rooted in the social realm. He then perceives the rituals and customs of the Inisfree community as a form of social repression. Being "forced to 'walk out' with Mary Kate under a chaperon,"[138] as Gibbons notes, Sean cannot resist asking: "Why, back in the States, I'd drive up, honk the horn, and the girl would come running up […]."[139] The status of these sentiments of American directness and individualism then becomes immediately questioned through Michaeleen's reaction. As he exclaims: "America…PRO-HI-BITION!,"[140]the village drunkard implicitly underlines the fact that each of the two viewpoints arises from socially mediated processes. In

[132] Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 79.
[133] Monahan 128.
[134] *The Quiet Man*, dir. John Ford.
[135] Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 79.
[136] *The Quiet Man*, dir. John Ford.
[137] Martin McLoone 55.
[138] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 237.
[139] *The Quiet Man*, dir. John Ford.
[140] *The Quiet Man*, dir. John Ford.

general, as Gibbons claims, Sean's attitude gives the story the atmosphere of a "clash between the loveless match of traditional marriages and liberal ideals of choice […]."[141] Within this context, the scene where Mary Kate and Sean run away from their company can be perceived as an escape promising the climax of romantic love. However, at the moment the lovers are supposed to reach emotional fulfillment through their union with nature, Mary Kate and Sean find themselves in an old graveyard, a place which is part of the socio-cultural realm, rather than the natural one. Most importantly, as Gibbons remarks, "the thunderstorm and the surrounding Celtic crosses and Gothic ruins are themselves so artificial and theatrical as to rule out any semblance of wild, uncontrolled nature."[142] Thus, in this particular scene, Ford elaborates again on the contrasts of hard and soft primitivism; placing emphasis on the artificiality at the moment which could show the release of natural forces, the filmmaker implicitly points to the constructed nature of the Hollywood cult of romantic love which, according to Virginia Wright Wexman, "[focuses on the emotional release at first and then proceeds to] a culmination in the form of a wedding, rather than marriage itself."[143] In this sense, the part of the film set in the graveyard clearly foreshadows that the scenes of the couple's wedding, following immediately, will not mark the climax of the story and that the film will focus further on the clash between the cultural attitudes of Mary Kate and Sean. In fact, such interaction has also been mediated through the graveyard episode itself. According to Gibbons, in Irish culture, the graveyard does not symbolize only death, but also hope and regeneration. Moreover, as he adds, "matchmaking was often carried on at wakes."[144] Thus, for Mary Kate, the graveyard does not represent a place unsuitable for the lovers' tryst. Yet, importantly enough, in Sean's culture, it has one coded meaning only; it simply signifies death. Sean's absent look in the moment of their embrace then suggests that the environment invokes feelings of unease in him. Yet, it is mainly the wedding scene in which the impact of the place on Sean becomes fully explained; as the flashbacks emerging at that moment show, 'Trooper Thorn' has killed a man in a boxing ring.

Paradoxically enough, in the course of the film, Sean does not recover from this painful memory of the past through a confessional process. In fact, the way he is eventually released from this experience represents a sort of anti-climax in terms of the conventional narrative technique. It is namely because of the fact that during the Donnybrook episode, one of the last

[141] Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 73.
[142] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 226.
[143] Virginia Wright Wexman, *Creating the Couple: Love, Marriage and Hollywood Performance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 8, cited from Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 73.
[144] Gibbons, *The Quiet Man* 69.

scenes of the film, Sean basically repeats the act of violence that had been the primary source of his trauma. However, in the soft primitivist world of Inisfree, violence has the status of a collective ritual rather than anything else. Thus, by engaging himself in the act which, as Gibbons claims, provides "a public, yet, at the same time, secret intimacy,"[145] Sean eventually comes to terms with his own past. Such effect of the vernacular ritual then fully testifies to the fact that, as Gibbons remarks, contrary to romantic individualism, in soft primitivist environment, "the communal presence does not represent a constraint […], but an enabling mechanism […] of emotional fulfillment."[146]

The final scene of *The Quiet Man* then definitely has a crucial role in the overall concept of Ford's film; as Monahan claims, it frames powerfully "'the process of rendering visible' of our viewieng."[147] As the excitement of the Donnybrook subsides, the villagers – who had been employed during the film both as performers as well as onlookers – gather together in order to greet the Protestant bishop coming to remove the local vicar from his post because of a lack of parishioners. Suddenly, Fr Lonergan, the film's voice-over who also occasionally occurs as a diegetic character, proclaims: "Well then, so peace and quiet came once again to Inisfree."[148] According to Gibbons, "[at] the moment the flashback structure of the film is set aside, [the viewer] expects the higher level of truth revealed directly by the camera […]."[149] Yet, the opposite happens. At first, the settled atmosphere of the narrative is disrupted by Mrs Playfair, whose entrance to the scene on a tandem is accompanied by the excited exclamation from the voice-over: "What's that woman up to now? Make way! Make way!"[150] Moreover, Fr Lonergan leaves his position as the voice-over and he joins the crowd. Gibbons denotes the moment when all 'the characters'/members of the cast "wave directly to the audience" as a "curtain call."[151] As he further remarks, the film simply draws attention to the contrivance of [its diegetic image] at the very moment reality […] impinges upon the screen."[152] Thus, it can be said that through this final element inserted into the pattern of *The Quiet Man*, Ford clearly communicates to audiences that in the world of social relations, the absolute unmediated truth does not exist and, therefore, it cannot be conveyed through any form of cultural representation.

[145] Luke Gibbons, "From Inisfree to Monument Valley: Irishness and Ritual in John Ford's Westerns" 22.
[146] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 239.
[147] Monahan 130.
[148] *The Quiet Man*, dir. John Ford.
[149] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 240.
[150] *The Quiet Man*, dir. John Ford.
[151] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 240.
[152] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 240.

As has already been noted, *The Quiet Man* has been subjected to various critical perspectives over the decades. Many critics have focused on the comparison between Ford's film and the original story by Maurice Walsh. Sean Ryder in particular points out that, "certain local and historical meanings produced by the literary text are replaced in the film by […] universal meanings [reflecting] the values of US-dominated […] film industry."[153]In other words, Ryder claims that Ford manages to create the opposition between tradition and modernity and thus implicitly facilitates the rhetoric of capitalism itself. Within the context of this fact, it has to be noted that Ford did change the pattern of the story to a great extent, especially by the introduction of Sean Thornton. In Walsh's text, the protagonist Paddy Bawn Enright represents an Irish emigrant who decides, after his return from America, to buy a secluded farm in the mountains in order to escape both the memory of his employment in the steel mill of Pittsburgh and his participation in the Irish War of Independence. His life in the mountains then fully represents the title of the story, *The Quite Man*, involved in the book collection *Green Rushes*. In Ford's film, Sean Thornton is an Irish-American who escapes his place of birth and, at the same time, does not fully belong to the country of his ancestors. As Ryder states, "he is constructed as a prototypical alienated modern hero, made guilty by capitalist modernity […]."[154] It can be then said that in Ford's work, the traumatic memory is transferred from a cultural sphere, to a fully personal level. Moreover, as has been already said, as a result of Sean's individualist attitude, his relationship with Mary Kate can give the impression of a quest for romantic love. In Walsh's story, the issue of traditional matchmaking defines the relationship between Paddy and Ellen O'Danaher even before the couple actually meets. Overall, it should be emphasized that both the original screenplay and Ford's interest in the sources documenting the Irish cultural traditions, clearly indicate that he was familiar with the particular aspects of Walsh's story. The fact that he eventually transformed some of these motifs, or some of them he did not employ at all, shows that the filmmaker did not aim to produce a culturally realistic portrayal; he simply chose Ireland as a country in which the communal bonds had still dominated over, what Gibbons calls, "the protocols of instrumental action;"[155] for him Ireland represented a place where he could create, together with his 'film family,' an imaginative world in which the play on the cultural myth could be accomplished. It has already been stated that the resulting interaction between tradition and modernity in *The Quiet Man* does not favour either of these two cultural

[153] Ryder 45.
[154] Ryder 45.
[155] Gibbons, "From Inisfree to Monument Valley: Irishness and Ritual in John Ford's Westerns" 14.

perspectives. Thus, contrary to Ryder's view, it can be stated that through his cinematic technique and narrative structure, Ford implicitly undermines the status of the unquestionable realism conveyed through conventional Hollywood filmmaking. Such assertions point to the fact that Ryder obviously took the images presented within *The Quiet Man* at face value. The success of the film among the public then clearly shows that, unlike him, the audiences are responsive to Ford's invitation to the cinematic dialogue and they simply enjoy the imaginative play evolving in front of their eyes. The representation of landscape in the film definitely contributes strongly to this 'possible' interaction.

3.3 *Ryan's Daughter*

The effort to communicate through the pattern of the film with the viewer represents the crucial point of difference between Ford's *The Quiet Man* and the second film included in the analysis, *Ryan's Daughter* (1970) by David Lean. As the British filmmaker himself revealed in an interview, for him, cinematic technique was something that should stay "concealed"[156] from the viewer. According to him, "one must become bored with the story before he/she can study the technique."[157] Indeed, Lean was not a filmmaker who liked to provide audiences with an insight into the way a film is structured; he simply wanted them to become absorbed by the flow of his film portrayals. As the director Hugh Hudson says in a commentary on the DVD released in 2006 on the occasion of the film's thirty-fifth anniversary, "Lean tugs you into the drama as a cinematic novelist […]."[158]

Ryan's Daughter, one of Lean's later works, is a film based on Gustave Flaubert's 1856 novel *Madame Bovary*. Lean himself had hesitated for a long time about the idea of his friend and the chief scriptwriter Robert Bolt to elaborate on this story, since he was well aware of the fact that there had already been a number of successful adaptations. At the time when he was discussing the script with Bolt, the filmmaker had already produced some epic dramas, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) – films which were delineated on large canvases and whose plots involved some kind of national conflict. This fact had obviously an impact on Lean's final decision about the concept of *Ryan's Daughter*. Being a great admirer of the rugged Irish landscape, he decided to place the setting of the film into this country; moreover, the story was to develop against the background of The Irish Easter

[156] Charles Reynolds, "David Lean on What You Can Learn from Movies," *David Lean: Interviews*, ed. Steven Organ (University Press of Mississippi, 2009) 4.
[157] Reynolds 5.
[158] Hugh Hudson in DVD commentary, "Making of *Ryan's Daughter*," 2006, cited from Constantine Santas, *The Epic Films of David Lean* 111.

Rebellion of 1916. In general, it can be said that *Ryan's Daughter* is a film whose fundamental structure is, indeed, based on *Madame Bovary*'s story of a middle-class wife unsatisfied with her life; as Constantine Santas notes, not only that "the main lines of the story were retained, but also the names of some of the characters were identical."[159] Yet, Flaubert's text and Lean's film differed in one fundamental aspect. According to Santas, the story of Emma's love affair, leading to her husband's suicide, can be generally perceived as a "polemic against Romanticism,"[160] as a form of imagination which provides an escape from reality as well as which causes a gradual decline in morality. By contrast, *Ryan's Daughter* is a work of a filmmaker who was a romantic at heart; it is a film which fully embraces the romantic tale, placing emphasis on the authenticity of the atmosphere produced. In relation to this fact, it should be noted that the film, presenting a strongly picturesque vision, does bear apparent features of hard primitivism. It focuses on the story of Rosy Ryan, the publican's daughter who becomes frustrated in her conventional marriage with the village teacher, Charles Shaunessy. Feeling herself constrained by life in the community, Rosy finds freedom only in nature. Nature itself then presides over the whole story, functioning as an outlet resonating with the character's emotions.

As for Lean's cinematic technique, scenery served, as did music, as the central element within most of his films; according to Santas, Lean had used both landscapes and cityscapes as "framing device[s] for delineating character and linking him/her to the environment or the action."[161] Within the context of this fact, it is necessary to note that most of Lean's earlier films have rather elaborate plots, as well as they employ more than one geographical location. In *Ryan's Daughter*, the story of a love triangle, spread over three hours, takes place solely in the environment of a Kirrary village, built especially for the purposes of the film shooting. As a result of this fact, landscape as a framing element is especially important to the structure of *Ryan's Daughter*. Indeed, in the film Lean combines wide angle shots with those more focused and intimate in order to give full impact to the portrayal of the character's feelings, or to capture the atmosphere of a situation. This process can be observed as soon as the film opens with the initial scene. It provides a view of stately cliffs bathed in sunlight; scenery that could easily be perceived as a postcard image. Yet, with powerful orchestral music in the background, a small black figure can be suddenly seen running towards the edge of the cliffs. The following close-up then shows Rosy Ryan for the first time as she watches her umbrella

[159] Santas 112.
[160] Santas 96.
[161] Santas 111.

being taken by the wind into the sea. Through the interaction between these two shots it can be perceived that, as Gibbons notes, "Rosy's personality is susceptible to natural influences."[162] A few moments later, Father Collins, the village priest, asks Rosy what she is doing. Rosy shows him the cover of a romantic tale *The King's Mistress*. Yet, when she sees his reproving look, she defiantly leaves the priest. Immediately after that, Lean again provides a wide-angle shot of a beach with a dwarf-like figure walking fast along it. Forming a parallel to the opening scene, the close shot then shows Rosy who, in a quite an opposite manner, throws the book into the air, so that the wind can play with it. Thus, through this sequence, Rosy's wayward behaviour becomes fully manifested. In the following scene, the viewer sees two small figures moving towards each other on the beach. As the wind blows away Rosy's and Charles' hats, "they both pick up each other's," which fact, according to Santas, "serves as a hint of their upcoming union."[163] Moreover, a few moments later, Rosy is shown as she is following the tracks Charles has left in the sand. Santas then perceives this particular behavior as a wish-fulfilment. In a way, it can be said that the scene set frames the following episode in the schoolhouse, where Rosy's romantic vision is confronted with Charles' attitude. Being out of her natural environment, Rosy, sitting cautiously at the school desk, tells Charles that she loves him. Although he initially tries to persuade her that they do not belong together, Charles eventually succumbs to her entreaty.

The following scene then implicitly reveals that the wedding of the couple is on its way, since it shows Father Collins explaining to Rosy that, as Gibbons remarks, the sexual pleasures of marriage will not fulfill her expectations of a "carefree, untrammeled existence,"[164] similar to that of seagulls. It is already the wedding night which then suggests that Rosy will become gradually more disillusioned with married life. Her romantic dream of a passionate relationship comes true with the arrival of Major Doryan in the village. The scene in which the soldier is left standing near the road with his luggage after the bus leaves is again elaborated in a way which helps to delineate his character. At first, a silent shot offers the view of a dark figure standing in the gloomy landscape. The close-up, in which Major Doryan moves, lighting up his cigarette, clearly shows both that he trembles slightly, as well as that he limps. Thus, through the combination of the 'landscape' and the close-up shot, it becomes clear that the soldier is shattered both mentally and physically. His intense emotions eventually draw him together with yet another sensitive character, Rosy Ryan. The climax of

[162] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 230.
[163] Santas 113
[164] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 229.

their affair, represented by the love-making scene in the woods, can be seen as one of the most striking manifestations of the film's hard primitivist perspective. Gibbons emphasizes the contrast with a similar situation taking place in the soft primitivist environment of *The Quiet Man*. In Ford's film, Sean and Mary Kate ride through a countryside full of various remnants of culture and history. Moreover, as Gibbons notes, before the couple unites in a passionate kiss among the crosses in the graveyard, they both "deliberately remove their headgear."[165] The film simply draws attention to the fact that "some form of mediation or cultural process must always come between the human and the natural world."[166] *Ryan's Daughter* conveys a directly opposite vision. Although the lovers also meet at a ruin, they continue further through pristine nature, which seems to resonate with their emotions. As the tension of the scene gradually escalates, Major Doryan slowly removes Rosy's bonnet as well as the ribbon in her hair. Finally, as Gibbons points out, "[…] they make love to the accompaniment of nature as the wind rises, trees creek and flashes of sunlight punctuate the dark foliage."[167] Thus, the scene clearly illustrates that, unlike *The Quiet Man*, *Ryan's Daughter* seeks to convey the notion of an unmediated and authentic relationship between man and nature.

Surprisingly enough, even though the film explicitly reveals that Charles has suspected Rosy's affair since the moment he saw the lovers' tracks in the sand on the beach, Rosy and Major Doryan are left undisturbed by him, as well as by the patriotic villagers, who find out about Rosy's unfaithfulness thanks to the grotesque behavior of Rosy's mute follower, Michael. The change comes in the scene where the whole village hurries through the storm to help the IRA members during the arms landing. This episode of the film is most often mentioned by the critics in their rejection of *The Ryan's Daughter* as a film conforming to the colonial vision of Ireland as "an atavistic and irrational place out of the historical time of modernity,"[168] according to McClintock. Indeed, as Gibbons states, by "portraying [collective] violence as a manifestation of nature,"[169] the film conveys the image of the villagers as a unified crowd whose mood modifies with the changes in the weather. During the storm, the villagers celebrate the IRA members; yet, soon after that the whole action breaks down as the British soldiers, lead by Major Doryan, block the road leading from the cliffs. A few moments later, in the sunlit scene, the crowd moves to the schoolhouse and

[165] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 230.
[166] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 230.
[167] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 230.
[168] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 40.
[169] Gibbons, *Cinema and Ireland* 231.

attacks Rosy as a suspected traitoress. The very lack of psychological dimensionality then represented the central point of criticism of the film. Unlike *The Quiet Man*, *Ryan's Daughter* was filmed almost wholly in outdoor locations. Thus, the critics have focused even more strongly on the contrast between the authenticity of the scenery and the flatness of the characters' personalities. Overall, both the issues of the status of the characters, as well as the accompanying aspect of the weakness of the plot, have been spelled out most often by critics in connection with *Ryan's Daughter*. Such comments are, indeed, valid in many ways. Yet, it has to be noted that they are part of the conventional critical perspective and, therefore, one cannot dismiss the film on the basis of these observations only. After all, *Ryan's Daughter* is not a film that completely lacks any kind of structural development, as some critics of its static quality have suggested. As for the main characters, a particular form of a growth can be observed in each of them. After finding out that Rosy's affair with Major Doryan continues, Charles decides to break up and to share his possessions with her. Yet, the villagers' attack changes his attitude; although the viewer does not know whether the couple will stay together eventually, Charles is obviously willing to help Rosy to leave the village with her head held high. Thus, as Santas claims, "he changes from a meek schoolteacher who stands by in torpid paralysis while seeing clearly that his wife cheats on him to a man who is capable of weathering the blows life has dealt him."[170] The way Rosy bears her fate, including the forgiveness she shows towards her father – the real traitor, clearly reveals that her character has also matured in a way. Thus, it is only Major Doryan who solves his situation with his radical act of suicide. Overall, *Ryan's Daughter* is a film which deliberately avoids powerful escalation; as Santas claims, "in Lean epics, things come full circle: every transgression is paid for, but, in the end, a cosmic order might prevail."[171] It is nature which represents the very centre of such hierarchy; moreover, it is also the primary element of Ford's cinematic structuring. As Santas states, the elaborate way through which the filmmaker worked with Freddie Young's breathtaking frames certainly "raises this rather ordinary story of adultery to a certain level of excellence."[172] It is then only the matter of a point of view whether the resulting spectacle is perceived as a negative or a positive aspect of the film. Ford himself obviously did not feel guilty of not providing the viewers with images of reality. "We tend to beautify everything we touch – and that amounts to what my dictionary calls 'picturesque

[170] Santas 102.
[171] Santas 108.
[172] Santas 112.

falsehood,'" said he, adding: "[…] I went at it full tilt."[173] The audiences have obviously accepted this fact; as Kevin Rockett notes, "despite its critical reception, the film was successful in Dublin cinemas, due in large part to the pleasure and pride among Irish cinema-goers at seeing Ireland on a large screen."[174] Similar to *The Quiet Man* cottage in the village of Cong, what is left of Kirrary still continue to serve as one of the tourist attractions of the Dingle peninsula.

3.4 *Poitín*

With regard to the above mentioned statement by Lean, it can be asserted that the harsh rural environment portrayed in *Ryan's Daughter* differs in essence from the image of the bleak Connemara landscape conveyed in the last selected film, *Poitín* (1978), by Bob Quinn. Indeed, Quinn's film, released only eight years after *Ryan's Daughter*, had been conceived in strikingly different socio-cultural conditions. According to Maeve Connolly, "the late 1970s and early 1980s were marked by an intersection of local and international film cultures that proved productive for both theorists and practitioners."[175] Moreover, as Miriam Hansen notes, "postmodernist challenge to modernism and modernity opened a space for the understanding of alternative forms of modernism."[176] Thus, as Peter Wollen points out, the focus moved to the avant-garde as the strategy "concerned with semiotic expansion."[177] This period of experimentation has a special role within the context of Irish culture, since it marked decades of an intense effort to establish both the indigenous filmmaking and critical culture. In spite of the fact the decades of protectionist nationalism were long gone, the government made the first step to support indigenous filmmaking as late as in 1973, when the Arts Council's Film Script Award was set up. This process then escalated with the establishment of the Irish Film Board, the organization which, as Kevin Rockett notes, eventually ceased to exist due to "the considerable competition between members of the independent sector and those who favored more commercial approach to Irish film production."[178] Still the first phase of its activity created a solid basis for its second stage starting in 1993. As for the creative activity of Irish

[173] Kevin Brownlow, *David Lean: A Biography* (London: Richard Cohen, 1996) 565, cited from Pettitt, *Screening Ireland, Film and Television Representation*, 101.
[174] Rockett *et al*., *Cinema and Ireland*, 113, cited from Pettitt, 101.
[175] Maeve Connolly, "Sighting an Irish Avant-Garde in the Intersection of Local and International Cultures," *Boundary*, 3. 1 (2004): 265.
[176] Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses," *Re-inventing Film Studies*, Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 32, cited from Connolly, 265.
[177] Peter Wollen, "The Two Avant-Gardes," *Studio International*, 190. 978 (1975): 171-175, cited from Connolly, "Sighting an Irish Avant-Garde in the Intersection of Local and International Cultures" 13.
[178] Des O'Rawe, "Origins and Orientation, An Interview with Kevin Rockett," *Canadian Journal of Irish* Studies, 29. 2 (2003): 59.

filmmakers at that time, it had obviously been strongly influenced by the ever-present debates concerning the status of Irish cultural identity; the members of the Irish New Wave were concerned especially with the postmodernist attitude towards the relationship between tradition and modernity. In order to achieve complex and, at the same time, culturally distinct film representations, these filmmakers worked creatively with narrative genre and conventions. As Rockett remarks, only through such processes, "the visual re-imagining of Irish culture became possible."[179]

Bob Quinn has not only contributed significantly to the development of indigenous filmmaking in Ireland, but he has also produced a large amount of critical work reflecting on the process occurring both in the film realm, as well as in wider society. Thus, as Patsy Murphy states, the filmmaker, "whose twinned passions of cultural identity and film have become embodied within the name of his company Cinegael ('the Irish race')," [180]indeed, represents a leading personage in Irish culture.

Poitín counts among the films in which Quinn discusses the issue of Irish cultural identity within the framework of ethnographic filmmaking. The idealized vision of the West of Ireland, which had served as a symbol of the nation for the greater part of the twentieth century, lies implicit beneath the intertextual pattern of the film. It is then through the combination of the fictional and documentary elements that the filmmaker managed to undermine the status of this essentialist vision without abandoning Irish cultural tradition as such. According to Jerry White, Quinn himself "noted, in Film Ireland, that he made the film as a response to *The Quiet Man*."[181] Yet, it is the very same scholar who then points out that, with regard to the innovative pattern of the film, it is definitely interesting to observe "the way Quinn dealt with the impact of Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran* (1934), [the famous film] regularly heralded as a documentary classic."[182] Flaherty's romantic vision of life on the islands is based on the hard primitivist aesthetic. Paradoxically then, the filmmaker used predominantly fictional elements in his effort to convey a vision based on authenticity and realism. Thus, as Philippe Pilard claims, it can be said that Flaherty "wanted to bend reality to the dimensions of his dreams."[183] Importantly enough, as William Rothman notes, "*Man of*

[179] Des O'Rawe 58.
[180] Patsy Murphy, "Cinegael Retrospective" *Cinegael* webpage, 2011, Apr. 2012 < http://conamara.org/index.php?page=cinegael>.
[181] Jerry White, "The Films of Bob Quinn: Towards an Irish Third Cinema," *Cinegael* webpage, 2011, Apr. 2012 < http://conamara.org/index.php?page=cinegael>.
[182] Jerry White, "Arguing with Ethnography: The Films of Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault," *Cinema Journal*, 42. 2, (2003): 3.
[183] Philippe Pilard, "Notes Regarding 'Flaherty Country' and 'Perrault Country,'" in Paul Warren, ed., *Pierre Perrault: Cinéste-Poéte* (Montréal: L'Hexagone, 1999) 156, cited from White, "Arguing with

Aran was released before the distinction between fiction and documentary was set."[184] Therefore, the authorities in the Free State could easily qualify the film as a truthful portrayal of life in the West of Ireland. As for Quinn, White emphasizes that, unlike Flaherty, he made "that artificiality a central part of [his film]."[185] Indeed, *Poitín* is a consciously fictional film which employs aspects of the documentary genre; as White specifies, "[the film] was shot on grainy 16mm, Quinn used mostly non-professional actors, and the emphasis is on details of everyday life."[186] By replacing the scientific objectivity of a documentary with a montage of the non-/fictional, Quinn achieved a shift from the outsider's, macroanalytic perspective towards a vision arising from the centre of the culture itself. According to George E. Marcus, the film forms "a field of representation occupied by diverse others who aggressively and eloquently 'speak for themselves.'"[187] Thus, it can be said that as a result of a complex elaboration of the film structure, Quinn could lead a polemic with the stereotypical image of the West in the same media within which, as Marcus notes, "anthropologists once felt themselves to occupy a secure position."[188] In Ciaran Carty's words, "Quinn implicitly de-romanticiz[ed] the Robert Flaherty image of the rugged West as a place of primal dignity […]."[189]

The word 'implicit' in Carty's statement has to be emphasized since *Poitín*, indeed, does not represent the form of an agitational film typical of the Third Cinema; as White notes, it does not turn to "the postmodernist emphasis on the staged character of everything"[190] in its effort to undermine the status of the idealised vision. By employing both fictional as well as documentary elements, Quinn conveyed the image of the West as a place where the traditional values continue to exist, yet which does not represent an anachronistic, iconic space. The Connemara the filmmakers showed is a region which is "fully integrated into contemporary Ireland,"[191] as White notes. It is a place where the tension between tradition and modernity prevails in the same way as anywhere else in the country. This state is then portrayed through the focus on the inner world of the characters. In general, in can be said that in *Poitín*, the

---

Ethnography [...]" 6.

[184] William Rothman, *Documentary Film Classics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 1, cited from White, "Arguing with Enthnography [...]" 4.

[185] White, "Arguing with Ethnography [...]" 3.

[186] White, "Arguing with Ethnography [...]" 4.

[187] George E.Marcus, "The Modernist Sensibility in Recent Ethnographic Writing and the Cinematic Metaphor of Montage," cited from White, "Arguing with Ethnography" 6.

[188] Marcus, in *Fields of Vision* 35-36.

[189] Ciaran Carty, "A West with Warts," cited from Rockett, *et al.*, *Cinema and Ireland* 129.

[190] White, "Arguing with Ethnography [...]" 7.

[191] White, "Arguing with Ethnography [...]" 7.

notion of a family life is, as Ruth Barton states, "relentlessly deconstructed."[192] The poteen-maker Michil lives with his daughter Maire in a cottage secluded from the rest of the village. The daughter is either left alone doing the housework, or the two characters can be seen together in silence, inside the austere dwelling. The two agents Michil employs are at odds with the police, impersonating the power of modernity, as well as trying, in Barton's words, to break up with "organisation of rural domestic life."[193] The resulting frustrations of the characters become obvious in various situations through Quinn's skillful elaboration of the narrative and non-narrative elements. As has been already mentioned, apart from the major characters, the filmmaker works extensively with non-professional actors. As White points out, by "putting these people into semi-fictional scene echoing [the everyday activities,]" Quinn creates situations which have both a subjective character, yet, at the same time, have a status of "collective utterances."[194] This form of auto-ethnography signifies, according to Catherine Russell, "a total breakdown of the colonialist 'ethnographic' perception of [the Irish]."[195]Most importantly then, landscape representation in *Poitín* has a crucial role within this innovative pattern.

In the opening scene of the film, the viewer is presented with a long documentary shot of a cottage in a sunlit landscape. It clearly shows that Quinn deliberately avoided images of the wide ocean; instead, he placed the cottage on an estuary. The shot, without a soundtrack, with only a voice shouting to the feeding hens, can be perceived as the direct opposite of the initial scene in *Ryan's Daughter*. In Lean's film, dramatic music accompanies the movement of the camera from a wide-angle shot of rugged nature to a close-up portraying the heroine; by contrast, Quinn did not linger on details in order prevent the creation of a melodramatic atmosphere. The first scene of his film gains a matter-of-fact character as it is suddenly interrupted by the long, yet efficiently cut, shot of Michil making the poteen. A few moments later, Michil is shown rowing a boat in the estuary; at this moment, the magnification of the vision of a man against nature is prevented through a fast alternation of the shots in which Maire is hanging out the washing and the rather shaky documentary-like close-ups of Michil nearing the place where he hides the poteen under the water. Such interaction again helps to convey the notion that both of these activities represent aspects of everyday life. An obviously staged scene of a narrative status then follows. The viewer can hear the dialogue of two

[192] Ruth Barton, *Irish National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2004) 76.
[193] Ruth Barton 76.
[194] White, "Arguing with Ethnography [...]" 2.
[195] Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography* (London: Duke University Press, 1999) 277, cited from White, "Arguing with Ethnography [...]" 15.

policemen from which it becomes obvious that the power of the state is rather helpless in the struggle with the codes of the rural community. In the next episode, another staged situation takes place as the agents take the poteen from Michil in order to sell it. The shaky camera moves from Michil to Maire's head lifted from her work, as well as to one of the agents playing in a childish way with Michil's dog. This particular combination of the fictional and the documentary enables the viewer to perceive the tension arising from the fact that the agents are opposed to the domestic realm, yet, at the same time, something obviously attracts at least one of them to it. Maire's tense look shows that she is probably aware of the risks her father is taking with the two rogues, yet, she cannot do anything about it as she is confined to home for the majority of time. The following car chase between the police and the agents then serves as another example indicating that Quinn deliberately avoided the presentation of long spectacular shots of landscape in *Poitín*; the scene is composed of alternating shots oriented from the insides of the two cars. Thus, instead of conveying a macroanalytic perspective, Quinn provides the viewpoints of the characters. As the agents stop to quickly hide the load, the camera shows the figure of one of the villagers gathering stones for the field walls. This sunlit image is immediately interrupted by a shot advancing the plot; the viewer can see that the farmer is a witness to the agents' behaviour. It is through such an elaboration of the frames that Quinn manages to show that the traditional activities are still part of everyday life in Connemara without turning the vision of these into an iconic image.

The scene in which the agents sell the poteen they have stolen from Michil to the villagers counts among the most potent examples of Quinn's complex cinematic technique. The filmmaker makes the professional actors interact with the non-actors from the village in an obviously staged situation which is, at the same time, not alien to the activities of everyday life in the countryside. At the fair, people are simply standing around, chatting or selling their goods. Such pattern of the fictional and the documentary then allows Quinn to convey the atmosphere in the village where the individualistic middle-men try to break the rules of the community by ignoring the arrangement between the distill maker and the publican. A similar form of representation can be then observed in the pub scene. This opens with a focus on a man singing traditional Irish songs. Immediately then, the camera moves to the drunk agents. One of them constantly talks about his beloved dog which was deliberately killed by Michil for killing a sheep. In spite of the generally vibrancy in the place, the other agent suddenly exclaims: "This place is too quiet!"[196] Moreover, later on, the temporary owner of the

[196] *Poitín*, prod. Cinegael, dir. Bob Quinn, 1978, 65 min, 16mmm.

shepherd dog is shown as he is drunkenly asking the visitors of the pub whether animals have souls. Overall, the staleness of the atmosphere becomes strongly perceptible as the camera moves from the drunken agents towards the facial expressions of the non-actors chatting in the pub. One of the rogues then strengthens this fact by shouting that "[...] it is a dead place for dead people."[197]

Furthermore, the final sequence of the film is also important in this sense. Particularly, it is the scene where the agents break into Michil's house and one of them is laughed at as his attempts to rape Maire, which contributes, as White notes, "in a visceral way to the viewer's understanding of the inner lives of the characters."[198] The very final shot, in which the two men are drowned in the boat Michil has previously perforated, indeed, represents the narrative climax of the story. Yet, importantly enough, it does not communicate any resolution of the issues dealt within the film. The transgression of the rules of the rural community has been punished this time. However, Connemara sill remains a place where the conditions of modernity and tradition will inevitably continue to coexist. Overall, in *Poitín*, Quinn managed to create a complex and, at the same time, culturally distinct portrayal of Ireland through an elaborate cinematic technique in which the form of landscape representation definitely plays an important role.

To sum up, as the three selected films manifest, film representations of the Irish landscape did not decrease in number as the twentieth century turned to its second half. Quite on the contrary, as the amount of films produced became significantly enhanced by the newly-emerged indigenous filmmaking, 'the landscape narratives' came to reflect a range of attitudes. Firstly, the filmmakers have continued in using landscape as a means for strengthening the romantic atmosphere of their films, as in case of *Ryan's Daughter*. Moreover, they have also worked with it in order to communicate with audiences about the status of the presented romantic vision, as can be observed in *The Quiet Man*. Most importantly, landscape has also come to serve as a film element which can contribute to the re-imagining of Irish culture within the context of the postmodern society; *Poitín* represents a powerful example of this fact. Overall, it can be said that, owing to the strong intertextuality of the Irish landscape as well as because of its eloquence as a film element, landscape representations came to serve as important layers of meaning through which the different approaches to portraying of Ireland can be observed in their full comlexity.

[197] *Poitín*, dir. Bob Quinn.
[198] White, "Arguing with Ethnography" 14.

4 The City as the 'Newly Crowned' Semantic Space in Irish Culture

4.1 Approaching 'Cityscape Narratives' as Idiosyncratic Cultural Collages

In an essay included in the publication *Tourism in Ireland*, Colm Lincoln succinctly articulates the ambivalent position the city holds in postmodern Irish culture by stating that: "Dublin is everything and nothing, having failed to generate a tangible imagery which is in any real sense distinctive."[199] Indeed, compared to other Western metropolises, the Irish capital lacks a symbolic pattern that could act as visual shorthand for both the city as well as national culture itself. The fact that such monumental imagery has not developed sufficiently can be definitely ascribed to the socio-cultural processes in post-independence Ireland. As has been already noted in the first chapter, the rhetoric in the Free State had intensively sustained Dublin's status as a former centre of colonial power, embodying the aspects strongly antithetical to the traditionalist values of the nation. Thus, paradoxically enough, the metropolitan centre itself had produced a strong opposition between the city as a place of moral decay and the rural culture as the centre of pure spiritual and moral values. According to Conn Holohan,

> [t]he dominance of this form of representation within the national imagination meant that those both within and without the urban centre could deny the reality of the power relations that constituted the state; with those within claiming marginalisation from the nation, and those without asserting their peripheral status within the state.[200]

As a result of these circumstances, the range of writings that emerged in connection with Dublin during the first half of the twentieth century had, for the most part, conveyed "the notion of ambivalence about its position of power within the national space,"[201]as Holohan further notes. The outsider's status of the city in Irish culture then became strongly reinforced through the control the State had kept over the visual discourse circulating in the country. Having been excluded from visual representation for more than half a century, Dublin has not gained a symbolic imagery of a strong cultural authority, around which the social relations among other parts of the city could be visually structured. Thus, the city in Irish culture represents, in Holohan's words, "a heterogeneous space, one whose meaning is still

---

[199] Colm Lincoln, "City of Culture: Dublin and the Discovery of Urban Heritage," *Tourism in Ireland,* Barbara O'Connor and Michael Cronin, eds. (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993), cited from Conn Holohan, *Cinema on the Periphery, Contemporary Irish and Spanish Film* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010) 102.

[200] Conn Holohan, *Cinema on the Periphery, Contemporary Irish and Spanish Film* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010) 103.

[201] Holohan 103.

contestable and open."[202] Importantly, the fact that this state bears both a negative as well as positive potential in terms of cultural representation became evident in the 1990s, when Ireland became fully involved in global interactions through its rapid economic growth and when the urban environment as such gained a prominent role within the culture. The development in Irish filmmaking at that time clearly showed that during the preceding decades, the social realist perspective – "critiquing modernity and its ills,"[203] as Holohan states – had failed to establish in film representations of Ireland. The semantic openness of the city has allowed the contemporary filmmakers to continue to present the previously abandoned issues, such as gender and sexual identity, as an intrinsic part of social life. Yet, the resulting patterns have differed remarkably from the achievements of the New Wave filmmakers of the 1970s and 1980s. As a result of the increasing impact of cosmopolitanism, as well as because of the prevailing opinion, that as an English-language media, Irish film should make use of this advantage and seek to address audiences overseas, the filmmakers have generally eschewed the exploration of the complex cultural forces surrounding these newly exposed issues. On account of these processes, the general focus on the dichotomy between the influence of the global film industry and cultural purism has strongly escalated. As it becomes obvious from the collection of essays published in the magazine *Cineaste* in 1999, most of the influential personages active in the realm of Irish cinema have seen this attitude as rather unproductive in terms of the debate about the realization of indigenous films; according to them, the real interest should lie in finding a way to elaborate on the existing and inevitable interaction between the global and the local in order to achieve a culturally authentic visual form.

These assertions, made in connection with the representation process as such, can be drawn to the already outlined issues concerning the perception of the existing works. In the postmodern world, cultural hybridity, indeed, permeates all realms of society, the sphere of filmmaking included; still, one should be aware of the fact that the forces which are at work within this structure can produce different effects in the case of each film. These meanings then have to be perceived within the particular context from which a work emerged and in which it has subsequently existed. The questions of cultural authenticity and specificity definitely play an important role in such observation. Yet, as the previous analysis – concerned with the films produced in the decades when cultural stereotypes represented a much greater 'threat' than globalism – has shown, these aspects certainly do not determine

[202] Holohan 101.
[203] Holohan 127.

whether a film portrayal succeeds with audiences or whether it fails. With regard to these facts, the following analysis will consider Holohan's claim that "the city represents a liminal space between the national and the transnational;"[204] in terms of the Irish context, it will deal with the city as a fragmented, semantically open space which bears both problems and possibilities concerning the issue of cultural portrayals. Most importantly, it will focus on cityscape representations as elements through which the resulting patterns within films can be fully understood.

4.2 The Commitments

In Alan Parker's *The Commitments* (1991), the city plays the key role in the narrative structure of the film. The Northside suburban neighborhood of Dublin, a traditionally working class environment, provides the characters with a clear sense of identity. Both their personal experience of unemployment and economic deprival, as well as the cultural myth surrounding the area, placing it in opposition to the more affluent southside part of the city, cause them to think of themselves purely as Northsiders. One of the characters, Jimmy Rabbitte, becomes enthusiastic about establishing a Dublin soul band. In reaction to the surprised faces his friends show after hearing this idea, he exclaims:

> – The Irish are the Blacks of Europe, lads.
> – An' Dubliners are the Blacks of Ireland…An' the north-side Dubliners are the Blacks o' Dublin. – Say it loud, I'm Black an' I'm proud.[205]

This utterance obviously invokes the notion that the association with soul music is based primarily on the shared experience of the oppressed cultures. However, this issue is not further elaborated within the film. Thus, the analogy develops mainly through the class status of the band members. As Timothy D. Taylor points out, Jimmy and the band's trumpet player, Joey Lips the Fagan, present soul "as the rhythm of sex, the rhythm of factory, […] as the rhythm of people."[206] Importantly enough, this identification with the foreign cultural aspect does not serve the band members as a means to recreate their identity; as Taylor states, it simply allows them "to empower themselves in the identity they already have."[207] In this sense, it can be said that *The Commitments* is based on a rather universal theme of working-class men trying to make their lives more pleasant. The core of the film plot originates in

[204] Holohan 130.
[205] *The Commitments*, prod. Beacon Communications, dir. Alan Parker, 1991, 113 min.
[206] Timothy D. Taylor, "Living in a Postcolonial World: Class and Soul in *The Commitments*," *Irish Studies Review*, 6. 3, (1998): 294.
[207] Taylor 292.

Roddy Doyle's novel of the same name. As becomes obvious from an interview with the famous Irish novelist, in all of his works, Doyle sought to create a subtle blend of the universal and the local. In *The Commitments*, this aim is realized both in terms of the plot as well as through the writing technique. After Doyle introduces his characters as inhabitants of the fictional northside area of Barrytown (originally his birthplace, Killbarack), he desists from any further description of the place. As the author states, he counted on the fact that these areas are "pretty much the same everywhere [and, therefore,] most people in the world have access to their image."[208] As for the sense of local colour, it is infused into the text through the dialogue in Irish accent/working-class Dublin speech. In relation to this fact, it has to be noted that this form of narrative constitutes solely the novel. Thus, the lack of descriptiveness can be denoted as the crucial point of difference between Doyle's work and its film adaptation.

Not only does Parker provide the viewer with a minute visual depiction of the bleak suburban environment, but he also works with the visual appearance of the place on the narrative level as *The Commitments* decide to use the imagery for marketing the band. It is the intense elaboration of the mise-en-scène which represents one of the main reasons behind the accusations that Parker projects the essentialist Hollywood aesthetic into the film in order to "make it 'recognizable' to an international audience,"[209] as Jenny Knell notes. Indeed, the filmmaker often uses urban decay as a background to various scenes of communality in which the use of certain stereotypes invokes a sense of country life atmosphere. Moreover, as Knell claims, "in many instances, Parker employs 'urban wasteland' shots while overlaying life-affirming soul music in the soundtrack;"[210] the resulting tension between the melodramatic modes then draws attention to the staginess of the scenes. Overall, with regard to the descriptive pattern of the film, it can be clearly stated that in *The Commitments*, the cultural specificity does not dissolve in the representation of the city as what Deleuze calls "any-space-whatever."[211] Instead, the film can be perceived as an example of what Rockett denotes as "Hollywood regionalism."[212] Within the context of this fact, it has to be noted that even the novel itself does not deal in any profound way with the political and economic dimension of the conditions in the working-class suburb. As Lorraine Piroux points out,

---

[208] Roddy Doyle, cited from Fintan O'Toole, "Working-class Dublin on Screen: The Roddy Doyle Films," *Cineaste*, 24. 2-3 (1999): 38.
[209] Jenny Knell, "North and South of the River: Demythologizing Dublin in Contemporary Irish Film," *Eire-Ireland*, 45. ½ (2010): 9.
[210] Knell 8.
[211] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (London: Athlone Press, 1989), cited from Holohan 129.
[212] Kevin Rockett, "Irish Cinema, the National in the International," *Cineaste*, 24. 2-3(1999): 25.

> Doyle's work has [actually] been severely criticized for distorting a harsh economic reality through comical lenses and most importantly, for failing to provide a narrative of Ireland's social uniqueness.[213]

However, as Piroux further claims, such accusations have to be perceived in the light of the long-lasting "commitment to the expression of Irish essence in [Irish literature]."[214] Doyle's description of his style as "spare writing"[215] then clearly suggests that the author does not strive to produce portrayals that would bring a definite answer to the question of Irish identity. As Piroux notes, the minimalism and repetitiveness of the dialogues in *The Commitments* manifest Doyle's effort "to draw the power of expression from an intensive and material use of language, rather than from the symbolic and representational [status] of writing."[216] According to Fintan O'Toole, such technique allows "a direct, [if subjective,] reflection of what it actually feels like to be in a Dublin working-class suburb."[217] As for the film, Parker created it with the view that the international audience has little knowledge about Ireland, apart from a set of stereotypical ideas. As O'Toole notes, "the intensity of description then comes precisely from [this] assumption of unfamiliarity […]."[218] Thus, although the filmmaker works with certain features of realism, as shown by the use of amateur actors manifests, the authenticity of the portrayal gets inevitably lost to a great extent through its visual pattern.

It is the opening scene of *The Commitments* which provides clear evidence of Parker's romanticized aesthetics. Showing a busy street market where the goods involve old electronics as well as horses and other domestic animals, and where a street musician performs traditional songs, the initial moments of the film invoke the lively atmosphere of village fairs. A few moments later, the viewer can see the city train as it crosses the river Liffey. This shot clearly indicates that the setting of *The Commitments* is the northside of Dublin. Yet, for the rest of the film, Parker desists from further visual delineation of the place within the context of the city as such; he simply composes the film from a series of shots which the viewer is supposed to accept as a coherent and authentic portrayal of the northside. Furthermore, as the subsequent scene of a marriage celebration manifests, interior shots in *The Commitments* often belie the staginess of mise-en-scène just as those of urban decay do.

---

[213] Lorraine Piroux, "I'm Black an' I'm Proud: Reinvesting Irishness in Roddy Doyle's *The Commitments*," *College Literature*, 25. 2 (1998): 3.
[214] Piroux 3.
[215] Roddy Doyle, in *Booklines*, a television interview with Nuala O'Faolain, cited from Piroux 3.
[216] Piroux 7.
[217] O'Toole 38.
[218] O'Toole 38.

Thus, in the sequence in which the camera focuses on the priest watching the merriment of the wedding guests, also following the passing of Guinness pints from hand to hand, Jimmy's comment, concerning unemployment in the area, simply passes as an element within the elaborated episode, failing to bring the viewer close to the experience itself . It is the section of the film where the applicants for the band are coming to Jimmy's house which bears by itself an authentic atmosphere, owing to the employment of nonprofessional actors as well as to the fast rhythm achieved through efficient editing. Yet, as a result of the fact that it is framed by scenes in which the soul music soundtrack overlays the shots of the desolated streets swarming with busy activity, including children playing on car wrecks, the whole documentary style of the audition sequence partially loses its impact; still, these particular moments of *The Commitments* definitely have a special charm about them. The same can be said about the scene where a child is waiting with a horse for a lift, or about the shots showing the band members rehearsing for their first performance. The scene where the female vocalists sing on a derelict street in the midst of washing lines should be especially mentioned as an example of a rather clichéd image, denoted by O'Toole as "colorful poverty."[219] A few moments later, Parker's emphasis on visuality becomes fully pronounced as the band poses for a promotional photo. According to Knell,

> Jimmy is conscious of the iconic power of the Northside and, therefore, he immediately rejects being pictured against the background of the neoclassical eighteenth-century Custom House, explaining that '[he's] not after a bleedin' postcard, [he's] after urban decay.' [220]

As for the subsequent scenes showing the 'gigs' of *The Commitments*, it has to be noted that the enjoyment which can be seen on the non-acting audiences, indeed, infuses the film with a tinge of authenticity. In relation to the performances of the band, it is necessary to mention that the film has been also criticized for eliding the local elaboration of the songs in the novel. The lead singer in Doyle's work inserts names of real Irish places into the list of American cities mentioned in the songs. Interestingly, this aspect has a special resonance within the novel since, as Piroux explains, the fact that "the real Killbarack resurfaces in the song, 'Night Train,' suggests that it does not yield to a monolithic construction of identity."[221] It is then the closing scene of the novel which clearly manifests that in Doyle's Barrytown, social class, indeed, plays a significant, yet not homogenizing, role. After the band splits,

[219] O'Toole 36.
[220] Knell 8.
[221] Piroux 9.

Jimmy immediately starts planning the establishment of a new group playing 'Dublin Country-Punk;' thus, it becomes obvious that soul music represented for *The Commitments* simply one of the elements hit upon within the heterogeneous and transitional world of the Northside. In contrast to the novel, the film retains the notion of conveying the essence of Irish working-class identity till the very end. The final scene shows Jimmy as he outlines the further the post-band lives of the members in an imaginary interview in the pub toilets. As he reveals, some of them have succeeded in the music industry, for others the association with soul represented nothing more than a temporary passion which "raised them up from the squalor of everyday lives,"[222]as Taylor states. Overall, the pattern of Parker's film manifests in all its aspects that the filmmaker created it with the view of worldwide commercial success. He exploited the semantically open and fragmented visual status of the city in Irish culture for the purpose of creating a coherent and recognizable cultural portrayal. It is then important to ask whether the film should be condemned solely on the basis of the romanticized vision it conveys. After all, unlike various community films, such as *Ballymun Lullaby* (2011), its objective does not rest in a complex documentation of the social-economic issues related to the life of the working-class in Dublin suburbs. Both Roddy Doyle's novel and Parker's film are fictional works. The fact that Parker imposes a rather hegemonic perspective on the identity of *The Commitments* does not lessen the value of the film. In an interview, Roddy Doyle succinctly expressed this when he stated that "he [does not] see the film adaptation of [his] book as having a function other than to be viewed as film."[223] Indeed, as its unceasing popularity shows, the audiences have, indeed, enjoyed *The Commitments* purely as a charmingly entertaining film.

4.3 *Intermission*

The second selected film, *Intermission* by John Crowley (2003), shares with *The Commitments* the suburban setting. Tallagh, situated in the southern part of Dublin, was also a rather bleak place in the past, especially during the riots between the locals and the community of Travellers in the 1980s. However, today it represents a standard residential area, devoid of the problems that to a certain extent still prevail in the northside suburbs of Dublin. Although the opening credits clearly indicate Tallagh as the setting of *Intermission*, the film itself does not focus on the life of the community as such. Showing a number of

[222] Taylor 293.
[223] Sara Martín, "Adapting *The Barrytown Trilogy*: An Interview with Roddy Doyle," *Links &Letters* 5 (1998): 3.

individuals whose lives intersect through the robbery gone wrong, the film was seen by many critics as a black urban comedy influenced by Hollywood productions. Crowley himself admits that "the script was quite influenced by American models;"[224] yet, at the same time, he emphasizes that he was well aware of the hybrid status of postmodern Irish culture and, therefore, in order to make the film reflective of this state, he employed both indigenous as well as European collaborators. A close-reading of the film then reveals that Crowley has in fact succeeded in producing a complex cultural representation. Most of the characters in *Intermission* are unaffected by the Celtic Tiger boom. As Paula Murphy claims, this possession of an element of autonomy allows the filmmaker to achieve the authenticity of everyday life through the subjective experience of the characters. However, within the context of this fact, it is important to note that all of the individuals in *Intermission* yearn for their own place in society. As Murphy notes, they are either "at some pivotal juncture in relation to work and love,"[225] or they simply want to gain confidence in their positions. Thus, obviously, they are not free of any symbolic construction; quite on the contrary, in their strife they inevitably deal with or adopt particular symbolic structures. In relation to this fact, Murphy claims that "one of the major themes in this film [is] the assertion of power to make up for inadequacy/ to fill the void in being."[226] Importantly enough, anytime when someone manages to assert his/her authority, there comes an unexpected turn which disrupts such order. Thus, through the interaction of the characters, *Intermission* shows that postmodern society represents a fragmented, idiosyncratic structure, whose transitional nature brings with itself sudden changes and various juxtapositions. The way Crowley portrays the city suggests that it is paradoxically also a relatively close-knit structure, in which the constant processes are interrelated. In this sense, it can be said that unlike Parker, Crowley directly exploits the fragmented and heterogeneous pattern of the cinematic city in Irish culture.

As Murphy claims, the opening scene of the film conveys in a rather powerful manner the notion that in postmodern world, "individual's identity is always chosen to some extent."[227] Chatting with the waitress in a café, Lehiff, a character who, in Murphy's words, "epitomizes the urban rebel,"[228] explains that "[a] fella like [him] could be just a bit of fun in the sack, or

[224] Brandon Judell, "Ireland's Son of Altman: John Crowley takes no Shortcuts with *Intermission*," *Indiewire* 2004, May 2012 <www.indiewire.com/people/people_040322crowley.html> .
[225] Paula Murphy, "Interrogating Intermission," *Kritikos; an International and Interdisciplinary Journal of Postmodern Cultural Sound, Text and Image* Volume 3, Jan. 2006, May 2012 <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[226] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[227] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[228] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.

[he] could be [her] soul mate."[229] Moreover, he continues: "Or…I could be just a thief or somethin', some villain…just waitin' for the chance to [he punches her] to smack your jaw and rob the register."[230] This intensive atmosphere of unexpected violence then becomes succinctly framed as Lehiff exclaims: "you just never know…what's gonna happen."[231] The following shot shows a bus arriving at the station in the suburban area. Two chalky arrows with a notice – supermarket and bus station suddenly appear, suggesting the trajectory along which the life of the pivotal character, John, is structured. As soon as John arrives at work, the viewer is introduced to Mr. Henderson, the supermarket manager who constantly threatens his employees that they will be kicked out. According to Murphy, 'Henno's' repeated use of the phrase: "as they say in the States,"[232] suggests his effort to manifest that "he has adopted his style of management from an American model, possibly one disseminated through television."[233] A few moments later, the environment ruled over by Mr. Henderson is left and the viewer is provided with a shot from a smoky suburban pub, where John and Oscar discuss their problems with relationships. As is revealed, John has broken up with his girlfriend Deirdre, whereas Oscar has difficulty to even start a relationship. Subsequently, the pub is the place of the first meeting between the rogue Lehiff and the local detective Lynch. The scene in which Lynch follows Lehiff to the toilets, urinating on him after he resists his investigatory questions, clearly shows that the very character, who has previously seemed to fully manifest his autonomy in the café scene, is in fact, as Murphy states, "also programmed by the symbolic structures which surround him."[234] Striving to win some position for himself, Lehiff chooses to accept the role of law-breaker, assigned to him by society on the basis of his appearance. As for Lynch, he seeks to empower his masculinity through the symbolic status of the defender of justice.

Furthermore, other sequence focuses on some TV reportage filmmaking which fails because the protagonist, a guy organizing rabbit races in the backyard of his suburban house, tries despairingly to make the rabbits run. This scene is underscored through the following shot in which the director tries to convince his boss that the particular programme titled 'Little Big Town' should be enhanced with stories from the underworld. With regard to this idea, he visits Lynch, yet another urban individuality with a rather surprising inclination. The policeman's love for Celtic music, indeed, seems to disaccord with his aggressive behaviour.

[229] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[230] *Intermission*, prod. Brown Sauce Film Productions, dir. John Crowley, 2003, 105 min.
[231] *Intermission*, dir. Alan Parker.
[232] *Intermission*, dir. Alan Parker.
[233] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[234] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.

Yet, as Murphy explains, "by identifying himself with ancient Irish heroes, Lynch can affirm his ideal of masculinity and interpret his own violence as bravery on the basis of the old tribal law of vengeance and retribution."[235]

As has been already noted, *Intermission* is a film which manages fully to convey a sense of the rhythm of everyday urban life. It is the scene showing two bus drivers having a chat about their planned dinners after work (one of them cannot wait to buy some Asian food, spring rolls) which brings sufficient evidence to this assertion. A few moments later, the viewer sees Deirdre's mother and sister talking on the bus about the relationship between John and Deirdre. The moment when the bus driver, hearing their conversation, takes the microphone and asks them whether the two are, or are not, together, signifies that in the postmodern world, the boundary between the private and public often disappears. The subsequent episode, in which the bus crashes owing to the stone thrown into its front window by a child, indeed, represents one of the crucial moments of the film, since the characters' lives intersect at this point for the first time. This part opens with an awkward family meeting with Deirdre, her new lover, and her mother and sister. The two women who were present at the place of the accident then describe it. According to Neil Mitchell, the interaction between the flashbacks and the shots of the room has the effect that,

> [t]he sequence moves from comedic banter through unexpected disruption to familial tensions, highlighting the [status] of the environment [in which] unexpected events and social mores affect the average Dubliners.[236]

The notion of such interrelatedness is strengthened as the dialogue in the pub between the shattered bus driver and Lehiff reveals that the latter has got a black eye in an encounter with the very same little rogue who caused the bus accident. Moreover, there follows a shot in which Noleen, a woman abandoned by her husband for the younger Deirdre, scolds a shop assistant in an effort to assume her authority. A fast cut then moves the viewer to another place in the supermarket where Mr. Henderson is pestering his employees again. As he is leaving, John hesitates a while and then hits the manager with a tin of beans. This act invokes general merriment among the customers, and especially among his colleagues. The whole scene seems to escalate into his celebration as John starts dancing on a cashier belt. However, when the belt suddenly moves, the hero of the moment loses balance and falls down. Thus, the whole sequence, framed by the supermarket as the setting, manifests that a constant

[235] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[236] Neil Mitchell, "*Intermission*," *World Film Locations: Dublin*, Jez Conolly, Caroline Whelan, eds. (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2011) 80.

struggle for position takes place within the idiosyncratic environment of the postmodern city. The episode also determines the further development of the plot line. Having been fired from his job, John decides to take his fortune in his own hands and joins in with the plan of Lehiff and the bus driver to kidnap Deirdre and make her lover, a bank clerk, rob his branch. The scenes following this action present many paradoxical moments. Namely, it is the shot in which the robbers listen to the detective's CD's of Celtic music while driving his car, stolen by Lehiff. Moreover, as Murphy points out, while Lehiff is waiting with the captive in her house, his fascination with woks suggests that the character in fact "yearns for domesticity."[237] In the meantime, the focus of the camera moves several times to detective Lynch, showing how his authority is constantly undermined by his main enemies (Lehiff steals his car) as well as by his colleagues who obviously mock his attitude. Moreover, at one point, Ben tells Lynch that his boss has rejected the realization of the document about him as a hunter of criminals. Eventually, the detective persuades the director to make the project; just as they leave the flat of a drug dealer and think about where to take the other "mythic shot"[238] of Lynch, Lehiff, who is running away from the place of the failed robbery, passes by in the stolen car.

In the following car chase, the characters gradually move out of the city to the countryside, which fact causes Lynch to observe that "[Lehiff is] out of his element now [...]." The moment Ben replies: "So are we Gerry!,"[239] a tractor appears in the road, forcing Lehiff to turn the wheel. As he spins, he crashes into a sheep. According to Holohan, both the car chase with Celtic music in the soundtrack, as well as the scene showing the dead sheep on the bonnet, mark the countryside as a "space apart, a dead place which has no easy relationship of continuity with the everyday of the urban present."[240] The following moments, indeed, even reinforce this notion. Perceiving the countryside as the environment most suitable for his manly deeds, Lynch challenges Lehiff to a fight. Yet, the criminal immediately misuses the situation and takes out a gun. Thus, according to Murphy, the scene manifests "the inadequacy of the ideology of the mythic past in postmodern society."[241] The moment when a shot comes and Ben's camera switches off becomes intermingled with the climax of yet another car chase taking place within the city. Trying to reassume his authority, the bus driver chases the child who previously caused the accident. However, the moment he ends up

[237] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[238] *Intermission*, dir. Alan Parker.
[239] *Intermission*, dir. Alan Parker.
[240] Holohan 137.
[241] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.

hanging over the edge of a dike, his fate becomes dependent yet again on the behaviour of the little boy. Although the driver begs him to step on the fender, the child decides to make the car swing. The fall of Ben's camera after the shot is then parallel with the fall of the car.

The final section of *Intermission* is then composed of a fast sequence of scenes from which the viewer learns that John eventually became able to express his emotions to Deirdre and, therefore, the two are together again. Moreover, it is revealed that it was Ben who saved Lynch by shooting Lehiff. However, as Murphy notes, when the detective tells Ben that "[t]he way [the incident] was told is the way it has to be,"[242] it becomes obvious that he still "identifies with the Celtic warrior."[243] Thus, it can be said that the closing moments succinctly frame the overall structure of the film, from which, as Murphy states, it becomes clear that,

> [t]he shifting symbolic of [postmodern] Irish society is not a mass movement along one trajectory, but operates through the combination of old and new; modernity and mysticism; rural and urban, indigenous and global; symbolic and imaginary realities and the tensions and power struggles between them.[244]

To sum up, as the preceding pages have revealed, the cinematic city represents a rather incoherent visual structure in Irish culture. The semantic openness inherent in such state has been widely discussed as an impediment to the realization of indigenous films. Yet, as the filmmakers, such as John Crowley, prove in their works, it can definitely be exploited to the elaboration of culturally complex and authentic cinematic representations. Most importantly then, cityscapes in film portrayals of Ireland do not lack their primary function; just as landscapes, they fully reflect the cultural forces acting within the pattern of each film. Thus, they can be perceived as important elements facilitating the viewer's understanding of modern/ postmodern (Irish) filmmaking.

[242] *Intermission*, dir. Alan Parker.
[243] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.
[244] Murphy <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.

5 Conclusion

This thesis opened with a poem in which the author, an Irish poet John Montague, explicitly elaborates on the relationship between society and locality. Now, at the end of the work, the notion that "identity cannot [be developed] without geographical context,"[245] as Graham states, becomes definitely much more conceivable owing to the presented observations. Importantly, the analysis showed that cultural landscapes, as "allegories of meaning"[246] in Graham's words, have, indeed, played a fundamental role within the context of Irish culture for centuries. As a result of the fact that the social construction of place represented one of the key instruments through which the external power of colonialism assumed control over the colonised culture, these socio-cultural practices inevitably gained an especially strong significance within the context of the subsequent development in independent Ireland. The specific pattern of place imagery, which has developed with the successive waves of social change in the country, definitely bears evidence to this fact. Since the pursuit of national identity had been strongly based on the contradistinction from the aspects of the colonial culture, the West of Ireland, with its Gaelic tradition, became construed as a unique "centre of collective cultural consciousness,"[247] as Graham notes. Thus, with regard to the metaphors often used in cultural geography, it can be said that the Irish landscape represents a richly layered, homogenous pattern within which any differentiations become immediately perceptible. In the opposite way, the city in Irish visual culture can be seen as a blank canvas which represents, in its essence, a space opened to heterogeneity and idiosyncrasy. Importantly, through the hegemonic manipulation of the geographical myth of the West, the primary status of cultural landscape as what Graham calls "[a] multivocal and multicultural text"[248] has become negated; as a result of this fact, the subdued, yet, existing plurality of attitudes, which was subsequently revealed with the accession of the city to the position of dominant cultural space, has even strengthened the opposition between the urban and the rural in Irish culture. As the thesis revealed, these specific conditions surrounding the process of the social construction of place in Ireland had, along with the overall socio-cultural development in the country, contributed to the complex nature of the rather loose and heterogeneous concept of Irish cinema. Paradoxically, at the same time, these processes have added to the creation of a rigid form of cultural perspective through which film portrayals of

[245] Brian Graham, *In Search of Ireland, A Cultural Geography*, ed. Brian Graham (London: Routledge, 1997) Preface xi.
[246] Graham 6.
[247] Graham 7.
[248] Graham 6.

Ireland have been widely viewed. The inefficiency of the approach based on the opposition between myth and reality, as well as between tradition and modernity, became fully apparent with the turn of the millennia, as postmodern Irish society came to represent a structure in which stereotypes are both widely reassessed within certain realms, and, at the same time, they strongly prevail within others – a structure in which the traditional blends with the cosmopolitan forming completely unpredictable idiosyncratic patterns of identity. The thesis has fully considered the compound nature of both Irish identity and Irish cinema. The analysis, concerned with contemporary as well as older films, then proved that the interpretative potential of landscapes and cityscapes, as strongly contextual film elements, can definitely help to dismantle the hegemony of such linear perspective applied to film representations of Ireland. Regardless of the extent of their complexity and authenticity, the cultural forces imprinted in each cinematic landscape/cityscape bear a strong informative value, both in terms of film works themselves, as well as with regard to the culture as such; they represent elements that can help the viewer to fully realize the inaptitude of the either-or way of thinking which, in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, characterizes Leopold Bloom's statement that:"The nation is the same people living in the same place."[249] The observation of landscape and cityscape representations embedded within film portrayals of Ireland can, indeed, contribute to the viewer's closer understanding of the complex nature of the mosaic called Irishness.

[249] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Fairford: Echo Library, 2009) 248.

6 Bibliography

Primary sources:

Intermission. Prod. Brown Sauce Film Productions. Dir. John Crowley, 2003.

Poitín. Prod. Cinegael. Dir. Bob Quinn, 1978.

Ryan's Daughter. Prod. Faraway Productions. Dir. David Lean, 1970.

The Commitments. Prod. Beacon Communications. Dir. Alan Parker, 1991.

The Quiet Man. Prod. Republic Pictures. Dir. John Ford, 1952.

Go Where Ireland Takes You. Tourism Ireland marketing brand. 2009, 15 May 2012 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZkvseSr460 >.

Secondary sources:

Barnes, T. J. and Duncan, J.S., eds. *Writing Worlds*: *Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Brearton, Fran. "Poetry of the 1960s: the 'Northern Ireland Renaissance.'" *The Cambridge Companion to Contemporary Irish Poetry*. Ed. Matthew Campbell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Brownlow, Kevin. *David Lean: A Biography*. London: Richard Cohen, 1996.

Connolly, Maeve. "Sighting an Irish Avant-Garde in the Intersection of Local and International Cultures." *boundary 2* Spring 2004: 243-265.

Cronin, Michael. "Imagining Ireland: The Construction of Tourist Representations." *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture and Identity*. Michael Cronin and Barbara O'Connor, eds. Clevedon: Cromwell Press, 2003.

Cusack, Tricia. "A 'Countryside Bright with Cosy Homesteads': Irish Nationalism and the Cottage Landscape." *National Identities* Aug. 2001: 221-238.

Dowling, William C. "John Ford's Festive Comedy: Ireland Imagined in *The Quiet Man*." *Eire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* Fall-Winter 2001:190-211.

Elliot, Marianne. *The Catholics of Ulster*. Harmondsworth: Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 2000.

Foster, R. F. *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*. London: Penguin Books, 1989.

Gibbons, Luke. “From Inisfree to Monument Valley: Irishness and Ritual in John Ford’s Westerns.” *The Quiet Man..and Beyond*. Séan Crosson and Rod Stoneman, eds. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2009.

Gibbons, Luke. “Romanticism, Realism and Irish Cinema.” *Cinema and Ireland*. Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, John Hill, eds. London: Taylor &Francis, 1987.

Gibbons, Luke. *The Quiet Man* – Ireland into Film. Cork: Cork University Press, 2002.

Gibbons, Luke. *Transformations in Irish Culture*. Cork: Cork University Press, 1996.

Gillespie, M. P. *The Myth of an Irish Cinema, Approaching Irish-Themed Films*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008.

Graham, Brian. *In Search of Ireland, A Cultural Geography*. Ed. Brian Graham. London: Routledge, 1997.

Holohan, Conn. *Cinema on the Periphery, Contemporary Irish and Spanish Film.* Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010.

Jorgensen, Annette. “The Power of the Gaze: Negotiating Tourist and Native Identities.” *Irish Tourism: Image,Culture and Identity*. Michael Cronin and Barbara O’Connor, eds. Clevedon: Cromwell Press, 2003.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Fairford: Echo Library, 2009.

Judell, Brandon. “Ireland’s Son of Altman: John Crowley Takes no Shortcuts with *Intermission*.” *Indiewire*. 2004. May 2012 <www.indiewire.com/people/people_040322crowley.html>.

Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland.* London: Random House, 1995.

Knell, Jenny. “North and South of the River: Demythologizing Dublin in Contemporary Irish Film.” *Eire-Ireland* Spr/Summer 2010: 213-241.

Lincoln, Colm. “City of Culture: Dublin and the Discovery of Urban Heritage.” *Tourism in Ireland*. Barbara O’Connor and Michael Cronin, eds. Cork: Cork University Press, 1993.

MacKillop, James. “The Quiet Man Speaks.” *Contemporary Irish Cinema*. Ed. James MacKillop. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1999.

Martín, Sara. “Adapting *The Barrytown Trilogy*: An Interview with Roddy Doyle.” *Links & Letters* 5 1998: 111-118.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

McIlroy, Brian. *Irish Cinema: An Illustrated History*. Dublin: Anna Livia Press, 1988.

McLoone, Martin. *Irish Film, The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema*. London: British Film Institute, 2000.

Mitchell, Neil. "*Intermission*." *World Film Locations: Dublin*. Jez Conolly and Caroline Whelan, eds. Bristol: Intellect Books, 2011.

Monahan, Barry. "Narrative Pleasures of the Visualised Nation: *The Quiet Man* and Disruptive System of Viewing." *The Quiet Man..and Beyond*. Séan Crosson and Rod Stoneman, eds. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2009.

Montague, John. *The Rough Field*. Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1979.

Murphy, Patsy. "Cinegael Retrospective." *Cinegael* webpage. 2011, Apr. 2012 <http://conamara.org/index.php?page=cinegael>.

Murphy, Paula. "Interrogating *Intermission*," *Kritikos; An International and Interdisciplinary Journal of Postmodern Cultural Sound, Text and Image*. Jan. 2006. Jan. 2012 <http://intertheory/org/murphy.htm>.

Nash, Catherine. "'Embodying the Nation' – The West of Ireland Landscape and Irish Identity." *Tourism in Ireland: A Critical Analysis*. Barbara O'Connor and Michael Cronin, eds. Cork: Cork University Press, 1993.

Nolan, Emer. "Modernism and the Irish Revival," *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*. Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

O'Brien, Harvey. "The Identity of an Irish Cinema." *Reel Ireland* 3rd edition. 2007. 30 Oct.2011 <http://www.ifi.ie/international/history.pdf>.

O'Rawe, Des. "Origins and Orientation, An Interview with Kevin Rockett." *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Fall 2003: 57-61.

O'Toole, Fintan. "Working-class Dublin on Screen: The Roddy Doyle Films." *Cineaste* 24 1999: 36-39.

Pettitt, Lance. *Screening Ireland, Film and Television Representation*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Piroux, Lorraine. "I'm Black an' I'm Proud: Reinvesting Irishness in Roddy Doyle's *The Commitments*." *College Literature* Spring 1998: 45-57.

Quinn, Bob. "Irish Cinema at the Crossroads: A Filmmakers Symposium." *Cinéaste* March 1999: 70-73.

Rockett, Kevin. "Aspects of the Los Angelesation of Ireland." *Irish Communications Review* 1 1991: 20-30.

Reynolds, Charles. “David Lean on What You Can Learn from Movies.” *David Lean: Interviews*. Ed. Steven Organ. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009.

Ryder, Sean. “Modernity’s Other: *The Quiet Man, The Field* and *The Commitments*.” *The Quiet Man..and Beyond*. Séan Crosson and Rod Stoneman, eds. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2009.

Santas, Constantine. *The Epic Films of David* Lean. Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2011.

Slater, Eamon. “The Hidden Landscape Aesthetic of *The Quiet Man*.” *The Quiet Man..and Beyond*. Séan Crosson and Rod Stoneman, eds. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2009.

Taylor, Timothy D. “Living in a Postcolonial World: Class and Soul in *The Commitments*.” *Irish Studies Review* 6 1998: 291-302.

White, Jerry. “Arguing with Ethnography: The Films of Bob Quinn and Pierre Perrault.” *Cinema Journal* 42. 2 2003: 101-124.

White, Jerry. “The Films of Bob Quinn: Towards an Irish Third Cinema.” *Cinegael* webpage. 2011. Apr. 2012 < http://conamara.org/index.php?page=cinegael>.

Williams, W. H. A. *Tourism, Landscape and the Irish Character: British Travel Writers in the Pre-Famine Ireland*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

7 Abstract in English

The thesis focuses on the role of landscapes and cityscapes in selected film representations of Ireland. It is the discipline of cultural geography which serves as the primary theoretical basis for this analysis. Firstly, the general observations concerning the social elaboration of place are applied within the particular cultural context. Thus, it becomes revealed that these socio-cultural practices bear a special significance in Irish culture. Apart from that, the thesis also fully delineates the complex nature of both the concept of Irish identity and Irish cinema. This account provides the basis for to the primary assertion that film portrayals of Ireland require strongly a wide, non-linear analytical approach. Importantly, the thesis also draws attention to particular cultural dichotomies which prevail within most realms of Irish society, showing a tension between its relationship to the present and the past. Within the context of film representation, this binary cultural perspective is then presented as a phenomenon which has had a significant impact on both the process of filmmaking in Ireland, as well as on the perception of produced films. Especially in the second case, the effect can be perceived as rather negative, since it prevents the realization of a fully non-exclusionary analysis. The thesis elaborates on the contextuality, as well as on the visual eloquence of cinematic cultural landscapes, in order to prove that they are important elements which can strongly facilitate the processes of a film's close reading. The analysis of five selected films then demonstrates that both landscape and cityscape representations function as layers of meaning which do not only provide a valuable insight into the pattern of a particular cinematic portrayal of Ireland, but they can also help the viewer to come closer to the understanding of the complex nature of Irish culture.

Key words: cultural geography, landscape, cityscape, film representation, Irish culture, Irish identity.

8 Abstract in Czech

Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na význam vesnické a městské krajiny ve vybraných filmových vyobrazeních Irska. Kulturní geografie tvoří základní teoretický rámec této analýzy. Aplikace všeobecných poznatků z tohoto oboru v daném kulturním kontextu dokazuje, že tyto socio-kulturní procesy mají v Irsku mimořádný význam. Bakalářská práce dále plně osvětluje pojmy irská národní identita a irská kinematografie. Z tohoto vylíčení jasně vyplývá, že zkoumání filmů vyobrazujících Irsko vyžaduje komplexní přístup. Důležitým aspektem bakalářské práce je také zaměření se na konkrétní kulturní aspekty, jež jsou v rámci Irské kultury stavěny do protikladu a které poukazují na nejednoznačný vztah mezi přítomností a minulostí v této společnosti. Jak ukáže bakalářská práce, v oblasti kinematografie měl tento úzce definovaný pohled vliv na filmovou tvorbu samotnou, i na její následné vnímání. Zejména ve druhém případě lze vnímat dopad tohoto vývoje jako negativní, jelikož dichotomický přístup neumožňuje komplexní zkoumání filmů věnujících se Irsku. V rámci bakalářské práce je dokázáno, že vesnické a městské krajiny ztvárněné ve filmu jsou vizuálně výmluvnými prvky, silně propojenými s kulturním kontextem daného díla, a proto jejich zkoumání může zásadně přispět k jeho plnému porozumění. Analýza pěti vybraných filmů jasně ukazuje, že zobrazení vesnické a městské krajiny fungují jako důležité významové roviny, které mohou divákovi poskytnout cenný vhled do struktury daného filmu a zároveň mu umožňují vnímat komplexnost irské kultury.

Klíčová slova: kulturní geografie, vesnická krajina, městská krajina, film, irská kultura, irská národní identita.